FEBRUARY, 1922 VOLUME LIV, NO. 6

THE BOOKMAN

WHAT DO AMERICAN CHILDREN READ?

WITH the advantages of our public library system, it is plain that the American child has no excuse for not reading. Statistics show, moreover, that he does read. What he reads is another matter. I had long suspected that neither the average librarian nor the average school teacher employed great subtlety in the steering of child intelligence toward better books, better books for each child as an individual, I mean. That's quite a different proposition from just better books. Most children have definite periods in reading which follow their growth; but the same periods do not come to all children. I know one lad who, at the age of fifteen, had exhausted every book on the technique of modern drama which could be found in his home town library, and another who, at the same age, was still reading fairy tales. It would seem the height of folly for a parent, teacher, or librarian to attempt forcibly to shift such a period, yet such attempts are often made. By that I mean, if a boy wishes to read nothing but stories of camp and trail, he should not be pushed to Dickens. The best stories of camp and trail should be put tactfully before him, until through his interest in a subject he may be led to interest in an author, and so to another line of reading. Some children read on a variety of topics, during the same period. Always, though, it is the book they *want* to read most that counts, not the one that their mentor commands them to read. Such a forced diet cannot but cause mental indigestion.

When, cooperating with the Children's Book Week Committee, THE BOOKMAN offered a series of prizes to children for the best essays on "Books I Like to Read", it was with a preconceived notion that much was radically wrong in the book education of children. This feeling persisted when the essays themselves began to flood the office. The prizewinning compositions, published in the January number, were entertaining but not brilliant. They were written obviously by children whose reading had been guided by their parents, who cared for the unusual in books, had imagination, and were by no means the average.

Certain generalizations we were

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able to make from our reading of the essays submitted. Boys do not read girls' books, nor do many girls. The mind of the American little girl runs amazingly toward Boy Scout books, though she likes stories of girls' schools and colleges. The children whose papers were rated lowest, inclined most toward the conventional "series". There seemed to be a healthy love of biography, lives of American statesmen and figures like Joan of Arc; history, in the form of fiction or Greek and Roman mythology; travel books such as the foreign "Twins" series; and nature books, popular ones being those of Thornton Burgess and Ernest Thompson Seton.

There were, too, amusing moments in this contest. One young lady writes that she likes only books in red covers. Another objects to school history because it deals entirely with the doings of adults. "I suppose they had children in colonial days but all we hear about is George Washington and Paul Revere." Still another closes with the gesture of a Jane Austen. "To sum up", writes Rosa Saffin, age fourteen, "I do not think that sugar-coated fictions about Molly and Polly and Billy appeal to young girls any more. Most of us like to read a book which takes some sense to understand. And some books write of such foolish subjects that I sometimes wonder if a girl's pride is not insulted by its silly contents."

Then, after our first examination of these papers, 298 of them, 218 from girls and 80 from boys, we decided to tabulate them, and we were astonished to find that, as far as prose is concerned, the American child reads with creditable intelligence and discretion. There are some outstanding tragedies in these statistics. We offer them to you as a fairly nation-wide canvass, for what they are worth.

The most popular books, according to the number of times each was mentioned, are:

1.	*Little Women*	62
2.	*Treasure Island*	51
3.	*Huckleberry Finn*	41
4.	*Tom Sawyer*	40
5.	*Pollyanna*	30
6.	*Campfire Girls series*	29
7.	*Little Men*	26
8.	*Penrod*	25
9.	*Robinson Crusoe*	23
10.	*Anne of Green Gables series*	23
11.	*Freckles*	22
12.	*The Little Colonel series*	21
13.	*Five Little Peppers series*	21
14.	*The Last of the Mohicans*	20
15.	*Heidi*	20
16.	*Ivanhoe*	19
17.	*Uncle Tom's Cabin*	19
18.	*Grimm's Fairy Tales*	18
19.	*Poe's Tales*	18
20.	*Andersen's Fairy Tales*	17
21.	*The Call of the Wild*	17
22.	*Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*	16
23.	*The Bible*	16
24.	*Black Beauty*	16
25.	*David Copperfield*	15
26.	*A Girl of the Limberlost*	15
27.	*Alice in Wonderland*	14
28.	*Tarzan books*	14
29.	*Seventeen*	14
30.	*Little Lord Fauntleroy*	14
31.	*Jo's Boys*	13
32.	*The Jungle Books*	13
33.	*Kidnapped*	13
34.	*Oliver Twist*	13
35.	*Burgess Bedtime Stories*	11
36.	*Old Curiosity Shop*	11
37.	*Swiss Family Robinson*	11
38.	*The Crisis*	10
39.	*The Prince and the Pauper*	10
40.	*A Tale of Two Cities*	10
41.	*Tom Swift series*	10

Are you more surprised to find "Pollyanna" among the first five than you are to find the Bible twenty-third? If there were space to publish the entire list of books mentioned you would be even more astonished to find such titles as "The Broken Engagement", Balzac's "Comédie Humaine", "The History of Jesse James", Wells's "Outline of History", "St. Elmo", "The Shadow of a Sin", "Ten Nights in a Bar Room". Three children (one of

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them, if we remember rightly, a girl) confessed to a weakness for Nick Carter. And two girls there still are who cling to the Elsie books. Alas, there seems no one left to do homage to our old friend Dick Merriwell, although nine boys and girls remain faithful to Alger.

The authors range in popularity as follows:

1.	*Alcott, Louisa*	154
2.	*Twain, Mark*	111
3.	*Stevenson, Robert Louis*	90
4.	*Dickens, Charles*	88
5.	*Porter, Gene-Stratton*	65
6.	*Tarkington, Booth*	65
7.	*Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth*	58
8.	*Cooper, James Fenimore*	50
9.	*Porter, Eleanor H.*	47
10.	*Scott, Sir Walter*	42
11.	*Grey, Zane*	40
12.	*London, Jack*	39
13.	*Burnett, Frances Hodgson*	32
14.	*Kipling, Rudyard*	31
15.	*Shakespeare, William*	30
16.	*Seaman, Augusta Huiell*	29
17.	*Frey, H. G.*	29
18.	*Montgomery, L. M.*	25
19.	*Wiggin, Kate Douglas*	24
20.	*Defoe, Daniel*	23
21.	*Sidney, Margaret*	22
22.	*Churchill, Winston*	21
23.	*Spyri, Johanna*	20

As to poetry, I can only shudder at the memory of days made terrible by the forced learning of strange jingling verses. Practically every child is a natural poet. It is only when his sense of beauty and rhythm is forced into the conventional rhythms of our more popular poets that he comes to consider poetry as a thing of *ta-titty-ta-ta-tum-tum's*. Do not misunderstand me. I am not advocating the gospel of Whitman in grade schools; but some of Shelley and Keats and a great mass of lyric poetry can be taught to children who are now being educated on a diet of "Hiawatha" and "Paul Revere's Ride". At any rate, here is the sad list:

1.	*Longfellow*	23
2.	*Riley*	15
3.	*Whittier*	12
4.	*Stevenson*	11

All this seems interesting and valuable. I have been able to make only a few generalizations from the tables; but I should like to hear more from parents, teachers, librarians, and anyone else who is interested on the subject of children's reading. In the back of the magazine I am starting this month a small department for children who like to read and who enjoy writing. Being far more optimistic about children's reading than I was before reading these tables, I am yet not proud that fourteen American children adore the Tarzan books,—though I remember once reading "Diamond Dick" avidly. However, I think it distinctly creditable that "Little Women", "Treasure Island", "Huckleberry Finn", and "Tom Sawyer" lead the list.

—*J. F.*

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THE CASE OF LYDIA BIXBY

By Kendall Banning

So widespread has grown the interest in the memorable letter that Abraham Lincoln wrote in his own hand to Lydia Bixby—perhaps better identified as "the mother of the five sons who were killed in battle"—and so firmly established in American literature has that brief but masterly bit of writing become, that the purely historical facts of the episode have all but been lost—not entirely without intent—in the passing of the years. Indeed, an inquiry started some years ago disclosed that such information as was then obtainable was largely in the hands of two or three men who were personally concerned in what later became designated as "the Bixby letter case"; apprehensive lest the circumstances surrounding it might tend to discredit the representations made to the President at the time which prompted him to indite the letter, and fearing that the misapprehensions fostered might indirectly detract from the glamour that surrounds the incident itself, they had guarded their data almost as though it were secret. No question can arise, however, that can cast the slightest reflections upon the immediate occasion from which sprang this spontaneous tribute of the foremost citizen of the republic to one of the humblest of his followers who had suffered much from the war and who was then in immediate and dire need. That Mrs. Bixby's sacrifice was happily shown by later developments to be less than it was said to be, and perhaps believed to be at the time, cannot dim the inspiring flash in which the letter reveals the great heart of Lincoln.

The circumstances that led to the writing of the message read almost like fiction.

On the morning of September 14, 1864, a frail little woman in faded widow's garb walked wearily through the crowded streets of Boston. Past the gatherings of idlers who were attracted to the newspaper offices by rumors of fighting at "the front", up the long steps of the State Capitol and by the uniformed sentries who gave a touch of color to an otherwise sombre scene, she went direct to the office of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts.

They were busy days, these, in the military offices on State House Hill. The battle of Petersburg had been won and lost, and had sent long lines of anxious, pale-faced women to besiege the government offices where the claims of the needy who had been left behind were filed. The little woman in black was in no way conspicuous in the quiet throng that filled the anteroom, nor did the purpose of her visit differ materially from that of many of the others except that she insisted upon seeing Adjutant General Schouler in person.

"I am Mrs. Bixby—Mrs. Lydia Bixby of Hopkinton," she announced when finally she had been admitted to the sanctum of the officer in charge. "You may recall my visit of two years ago, when His Excellency kindly advanced

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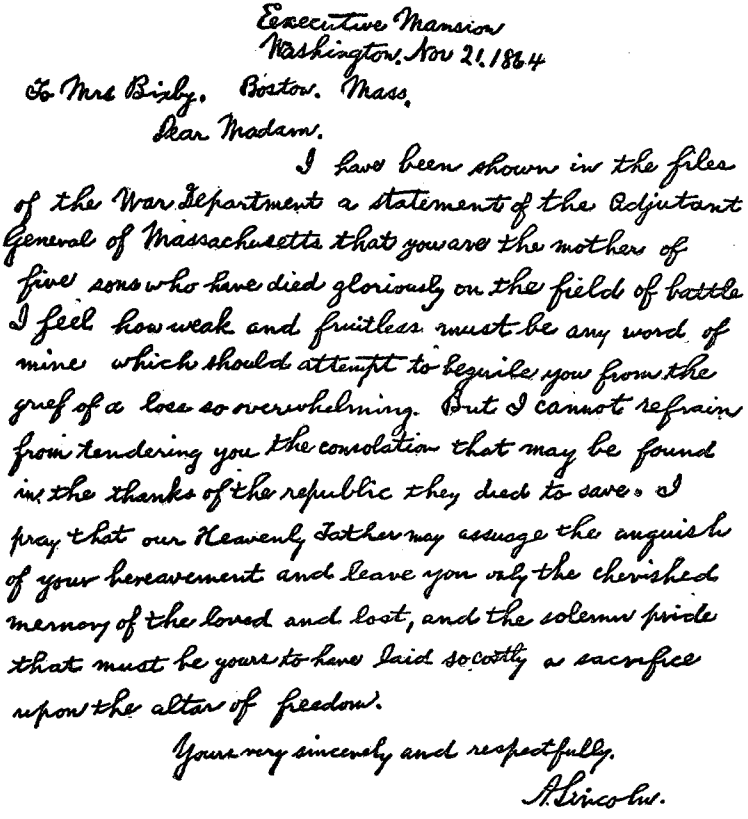
me forty dollars through this office to visit my son in the army hospital at Washington. I have come to apply for a pension. He is dead."



Executive Mansion
Washington, Nov 21, 1864

To Mrs Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam.

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully.

A. Lincoln.

From her pocket she drew some papers and laid them on the desk before him. Two of them were envelopes of recent date, postmarked from different towns in Virginia. Both were communications from company commanders; both reported in brief, official terms the death of a son in the action before Petersburg six weeks before.

"They were the last I had," she added gently.

Messages of death had come with too great frequency during the three years of conflict to occasion special comment, even though the routine of the war office permitted opportunity for condolences. But seldom did two such messages enter the same home on the same day. The Adjutant General regarded the woman before him with kindly interest as he made further inquiries.

In reply, she placed before him three more reports, each from an officer in the field, and each informing her of the death of a son in the military service of the Union.

"I had five," the woman stated simply.

Immune as he was to the ordinary scenes of sorrow, the Adjutant Gen-

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eral paused from his labors to offer words of genuine sympathy. Then, after a hurried notation of the facts in the case and a parting word of encouragement, the woman left the room and the machinery of the department resumed its official grind.

Ten days later the Adjutant General sent the following letter to the Governor of Massachusetts:*

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
BOSTON, *September* 24, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JOHN A. ANDREW,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

GOVERNOR:—

Your Excellency may remember that I had the honor two years ago to speak to you of a widow lady, Mrs. Bixby, in the middle walks of life, who had five sons in the Union Army one of whom was wounded in Antietam and was sent to a hospital in Baltimore or Washington. She was very anxious to go and see him, and Your Excellency was kind enough to draw your check for Forty Dollars ($40) to pay her expenses, and she made her journey. The boy recovered and joined his regiment again. About ten days ago Mrs. Bixby came to my office and showed me five letters from five different company commanders, and each letter informed the poor woman of the death of one of her sons. Her last remaining son was recently killed in the fight on the Weldon railroad. Mrs. Bixby is the best specimen of a true-hearted Union woman I have yet seen.

With great respect, I have the honor to be your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Signed) WM. SCHOULER,
Adjutant General.

To this report the Governor appended the following endorsement which, with the original document, was forwarded through official channels to the Adjutant General's office at Washington:

A report to me by the Adjutant General of Massachusetts on this case, in which he mentions the case of a widow, Mrs. Bixby, who sent five sons, all of whom have recently been killed. This is a case so remarkable that I really wish a letter might be written her by the President of the United States, taking notice of a noble mother of five dead heroes so well deserved.

In order to be assured of the accuracy of these statements the Washington office, on October first, requested a detailed report, which was furnished in the letter below, written twelve days later:

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
BOSTON, *October* 12, 1864.

MAJOR THOMAS M. VINCENT, U. S. A.
Ass't Adjutant General,
Washington, D. C.

MAJOR:—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, requesting me to send you the names of the five sons of Mrs. Bixby—who were in the military service; also the regiments and companies to which they belonged. They were as follows:

1. Sergeant Charles N. Bixby, Co. D, 20th Regiment, mustered in July 28, 1862; killed at Fredericksburg, May 3, 1863.

2. Corporal Henry Bixby, Co. K, 32nd Regiment, mustered in August 5, 1862; killed at Gettysburg, July, 1863.

3. Private Edward Bixby, recruit for 22nd Regiment, Mass. Vols. Died of wounds in Hospital at Folly Island, S. C. He ran away from home and was mustered in the field.

4. Private Oliver C. Bixby, Co. E, 58th, Mass. Vols. Mustered March 4, 1864, killed before Petersburg, July 30, 1864.

5. Private George Way Bixby, Co. B, 56th Regiment, Mass. Vols. Mustered March 19, 1864. Killed before Petersburg, July 30, 1864.

The last named, George, enlisted under the assumed name of "George Way." His name was George Way Bixby. The reason why he did not enlist under his proper name was to conceal the fact of his enlistment from his wife. Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,
(Signed) WM. SCHOULER,
Adjutant General.

Thus fortified with evidence, the Adjutant General at Washington forwarded the correspondence to the President. Then it was that Abraham Lincoln, touched by the story of such a sacrifice, put down for a brief moment the cares of his great office and, as a fellow being, wrote a letter of condolence that the world has since come to regard as the finest message

*The correspondence that has been quoted was furnished in 1910 through the courtesy of Adjutant General Wm. H. Brigham, of Massachusetts, in whose files copies of the original letters are still kept. While these communications are authoritative and while the data on which they are based were accurate so far as the records at the time showed, a part of the correspondence was conducted, by a curious chain of circumstances that does not reflect upon the army officials concerned or detract from the spirit of Lincoln's letter, under misapprehensions.

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of its kind in all English literature. He whom the country had affectionately termed "Father Abraham" reached forth his hand to comfort one of the lowliest of his children.

All too many of the heroes of the Civil War went to their graves unknown and unlamented. Bright as the records of their deeds shall shine in history, the memories of many of their lives have passed into oblivion. But in his letter to the frail little widow in a town in Massachusetts—a letter written spontaneously from a heart that overflowed with human sympathy, and that carried the ring almost of congratulation—Abraham Lincoln raised her five boys to a niche of fame that shall endure with the records of the great war in which they served. Here is his letter—written in pen and ink on the stationery of the White House:

EXECUTIVE MANSION
WASHINGTON, *Nov.* 21, 1864.

TO MRS. BIXBY, BOSTON, MASS.

DEAR MADAM,

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

(Signed) A. LINCOLN.

At this point the similarity to fiction ends. Two of the sons, Charles and Oliver, were actually killed in battle as originally reported. Events proved, however, that George Way Bixby was not killed before Petersburg on July 30, 1864, as at first believed. When this case was called up in the War Department in 1893, a statement was found that he was captured on that date and that he died shortly after as a prisoner of war at Salisbury, South Carolina. A subsequent record, however, shows that one "George Way", presumably the same man, was released from the Salisbury prison, and while his official history stops at that point, it is not improbable that he eventually escaped to the Union lines and survived the war. The report of the death of Edward was later found to be erroneous—happily for his mother to whose support he contributed and with whom he was known to have lived at 74 Pleasant Street, Boston, as late as 1876. Henry Bixby, who was reported killed at Gettysburg, apparently survived that battle, where it is probable that his wounding gave rise to the report of his death. He was mustered out as "present and living" on December 19, 1864, a month after Lincoln's letter was written, and there is a record of his death at Milford on November 8, 1871, where he was buried with military honors.

These errors have been partly explained by the fact that the five sons of Lydia Bixby had four cousins of about their own age who came from the same towns of Hopkinton and Milford and who served in the same Massachusetts regiments. In the confusion that attended the large engagements of the war, it is possible that the records of these nine Bixby boys became mixed. At any rate, the two families were closely associated. "There are Bixbys in Milford today who cannot tell the difference between the two families," stated Mrs. Warren Bixby, the widow of one of the cousins and the nearest living relative of the five brothers, nearly fifty years after the war ended.

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The Bixby family was not wealthy. The father, Cromwell Bixby, died at Hopkinton on December 22, 1854. Of the two sons who were killed in battle, Oliver was a machinist and Charles a trunk maker. Only nine days before her memorable visit to General Schouler, Mrs. Bixby had received an appointment as guardian of her grandson, a boy of six, who was the child of Oliver. In the absence of her soldier sons, the mother was often in exceedingly straitened circumstances. She occasionally sought employment as a nurse, and it was while working in this capacity that she died, poor and alone, in the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston on October 27, 1878.

The original Lincoln letter is now in the collection of the late J. Pierpont Morgan, in New York City. It is stated that Mrs. Bixby, in a moment of need, sold this document, which was for some time in the hands of a private collector of Lincolniana. For a long while the belief was current that the original was at Oxford, England. For many years, also, a much worn facsimile which hung on the walls of the now defunct Huber's Museum of New York was claimed to be the original, but this was shown to be merely a lithographed reproduction, stained by coffee and exposure, that M. F. Tobin, a publisher of New York, at one time retailed at two dollars a copy, one of which he presented to Mr. Huber.

Among those who contributed information concerning the Bixby letter were Brigadier General William C. Capelle, who was a lieutenant on duty in General Schouler's office at the time of Mrs. Bixby's visit and who recalled the incident; H. J. Moulton, journalist of Boston, who has contributed the results of his investigations to the Boston "Globe"; the Hon. W. O. Stoddard, the last of the secretaries of Lincoln to survive; O. H. Oldroyd, owner of the museum maintained in the house in which Lincoln died in Washington; Truman H. Bartlett of Boston, and the late Hon. Whitelaw Reid.

JUST INTRODUCED

By Genevieve Taggard

ONLY a few hours!
We danced like wind,
Our faces like noon flowers,
On one slim stem were lifted, turned aside.
You flew, I followed, matched your stride,
And held your pause, and swung and parted wide....

Only a few hours!
We danced like wind,
Thirsty as blown flowers,
Heavy-lidded, fearful-eyed.

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CONTEMPORARY ALFREDS

By Donald Ogden Stewart

1: ALFRED LAMBE

With a Sketch by Herb Roth

IT was, I believe, Charles Lamb who wrote, "All, all are gone—the old familiar faces." I am not sure in what connection or under what emotion the lines were composed (I know very little about Lamb), but it strikes me at the present moment that they correspond with peculiar appropriateness to my own feelings on those rare occasions when I behold the mutilated features of my friends reproduced in some daily newspaper. It is, all things considered, not wholly inexplicable that I did not at first recognize in the morning "Herald", under the heading of "America's Gentle Essayist", the picture of my college classmate Alfred Lambe. And then, too, there was the pipe.

Alfred had never, in the four years of my college friendship with him, smoked a pipe. As a matter of fact he did not, as I remember, smoke anything. I was, therefore, quite sure that the "Gentle Essayist" was not my Alfred. I was mistaken. Beneath the photograph was a review of his latest work "Puffs on an Old Brier"; in the course of that review was mentioned the fact that the author had attended C— college. I looked once more at the portrait. It was (in spite of the pipe) my former classmate.

Almost as bewildering as the picture was the criticism of his book. *Criticism*, as a matter of fact, is hardly the word to apply to the unrestrained praise of the enthusiastic reviewer, although the praise was not what occasioned my surprise. "We have here", I read, "one more delightful volume from the pen of America's reincarnation of Charles Lamb. We have here another of those charming books from this ever genial, ever companionable, ever beloved essayist." "Genial?" "Companionable?"—I thought back to those C— days when Alfred Lambe had moved like a whirlwind across our college horizon. I remembered his meteoric catapulting into the freshman presidency—his subsequent record-breakingly successful competition for the editorship of the college daily. I recalled Lambe the chairman of a dozen undergraduate organizations—Lambe the dynamic organizer—Lambe the Machiavellian controller of collegiate destiny. But Lambe the genial reincarnation of the universally beloved English essayist I could not visualize.

I tried to recall what I had heard of Alfred since his graduation. He had gone, as I remembered, into the newspaper business—as a reporter. We, his classmates, had of course prophesied a brilliant career; the class vote had, I believe, almost unanimously selected him as our choice for that

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doubtful honor "Most Apt to Succeed". After graduation it had been my misfortune to be absent from the various reunions of my class: I was not, therefore, more than casually and occasionally aware of the varying degrees of success with which my classmates were justifying to the world those days spent at old C——. Of Lambe I had heard nothing for eight years. I made a mental resolve to purchase "Puffs on an Old Brier" the next morning.

As is the case with the majority of my mental resolves, I completely forgot it. Weeks, months went by—and I was still unacquainted with the "ever beloved, ever companionable" essays of my old classmate. I might even have gone to my grave in ignorance of Alfred's literary efforts had it not been for a rather peculiar happening—a happening that was not entirely without its humorous side.

One morning I started downtown without my cigarettes. I am not, as a matter of fact, much of a smoker, and might easily have gone through the day without noticing any serious deprivation. But as fortune would have it, on the street car I found myself staring into a sign which shrieked in large red letters, "MAN, YOU NEED A CAMPBELL". And to emphasize this statement there was portrayed a vivid young fellow who was fairly leaping out of the picture in order to offer me his brand of cigarette. Now I don't like Campbells—and what is more I don't like the type of young men whom the advertisement portrayed. And if I met him in real life and he offered me a Campbell I am sure I would refuse. But there I was, wedged tightly, immovably in that street car, with my gaze fastened unavoidably on a young man I didn't like, offering me a cigarette I didn't like. And thus I rode for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time I pushed my way out of the car and strode in blind fury up the street. A tobacconist's window caught my eye. "Oh," I said, "I need a Campbell, do I? I need a Campbell, do I? I'll show that peppy young man that I smoke Chestertons and not Campbells." With that I opened the door of the shop and addressed the first young clerk I saw. "I want", I said emphatically, "a package of Campbells." "You want", said he, "what?"—and he smiled.

Now it was quite irritating, in the first place, that I should have said "Campbells" when I meant "Chestertons". But it was doubly irritating to have that young clerk grinning at me as though I were some curiosity. "I meant", I said with dignity, "that I wanted a package of Chesterton cigarettes. If you don't carry them, most decidedly I don't want Campbells." This seemed to amuse the young man still more. "I'm sorry", said he, "but we do not carry either brand you mention. You see, unfortunately, this is a book store." "A book store," I gasped; "but your window—" "Oh," said he; "that is our display advertisement for Alfred Lambe's latest book, 'A Smoker's Holiday'." "Give me", said I, "a copy of that book."

I liked Alfred's book. The essays were certainly genial and companionable. And there was, running through them, a delightful thread of domestic eulogy—a continuous pæan of praise to the household gods which almost made me a little envious of Lambe's complete matrimonial success. I wrote, of course, congratulating him on his book but more especially felicitating him on his apparently exceptionally happy home life. I extended to the unknown Mrs. Lambe my heartiest congratulations.

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"As I pushed open the door of the shop Alfred lighted his pipe"

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His reply was prompt:

MY DEAR S——

As I sit here before the fire, puffing away at old Izaak Walton (readers of Mr. Lambe will recognize the reference to his favorite brier) I seem to see dream children in the glowing embers. I have had playmates. I have had companions in my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays, and you, my dear S——, were ever among the first. I have been drinking egg hot and smoking Oronooko (associating circumstances which ever forcibly recall to my mind our evenings and nights at old C——), my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake: and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?

"Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more."

I am writing at random and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it, but *my* sober and *my* half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

P. S.—Alas, dear friend, you know not what you say when you felicitate me on my married life. There is no Mrs. L——. I live in stately splendor with my good cat Elia and my best of sisters, Clara, to make happy my declining years.

P. P. S.—Clara, the saucy wench, who looks over my shoulder as I write, begs me to bid you visit our little house—a wish which you may be sure is more than echoed by your loving friend.

The letter seemed to me a little unusual. In the first place neither I nor Alfred nor anyone that I know had ever "drunk egg hot or smoked Oronooko at old C——". And in the second place, Alfred's genial affection made me feel a little uncomfortable. I did not remember that I had ever, to any remarkable degree, played Damon to his Pythias. And digging through my old college scrap book I found another letter from Alfred which seemed perhaps more typical of what had always appeared to me to be our real relations.

DEAR BRO. S——

To date you owe the Gamma Chapter of T.N.E. fraternity the sum of $18.49. This amount is long overdue.

But I decided to accept his invitation—a decision that may have been influenced to some degree by the mention of his sister Clara. I had known—and liked—Clara Lambe in the C—— days. She had seemed to me much the finer of the two—a fineness in which was blended a rare scorn and a certain exquisite sensitiveness. Clara was highstrung. I might perhaps have fallen in love with Clara Lambe. I think that I—and many others—would undoubtedly have done so were it not for her unfortunate lack of physical charm. I was not altogether surprised that she had never married.

I met Alfred a few days later by appointment in front of the "Herald" office—at least, I was there at the appointed time. Alfred arrived three-quarters of an hour after. I recognized him of course the minute he emerged through the revolving doors. He was just lighting his pipe.

He stopped for a minute to say goodby to four or five friends and I had a chance to examine him rather closely. His face had changed very little in the course of fifteen years; it had become a little fuller, a little rounder perhaps—and certainly there were rather distinct signs of success (literary or otherwise) in the noticeable increase of Alfred's waist line. His clothes were remarkable for their picturesque shabbiness; he carried a curiously knotted green walking stick. The whole effect produced upon me was of observing a quaint character—almost out of a book. Perhaps that was Alfred's aim. A minute later we met. Two minutes later his arm was around my shoulder. Three minutes later he was telling me about the time he took John Masefield home to dinner. I shall not attempt to reproduce Alfred's conversation as we walked along, for most of it had to do with his personal experiences with authors

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whose nicknames I did not recognize. Suddenly he stopped.

"Oh," said he. "Here we are at Junket's. Do you know, S——, entering a book store is to me what entering Chapman's 'Homer' was to John Keats. The thrill—the mystery—of books!"

With that we descended the stone stairs. As I pushed open the door of the shop Alfred lighted his pipe.

That was the first of a series of eight book stores which we visited on our way home. By the time we had reached the seventh I had a pretty fair idea of the average interior of such a shop. I also had a pretty fair idea of why John Keats had entered Chapman's "Homer"—or at least why it had been advantageous to Keats to let others know how much pleasure it had given him. Street car display cards shouting "Man, You Need a Campbell" are not always the most efficacious means of selling one's particular product. Nor are they always the most irritating.

After Alfred had autographed his last volume in the eighth bookshop he turned to me. "Well, S——," he said in a loud voice. "And now home—and roast pig—and an evening of gentle talk before the fire."

The trolley trip to Alfred's home was uneventful save for a slight row with one unliterary conductor. "Sure and I don't care if it isn't lighted—and I don't care if you are Albert Lambe—you put that pipe away or you get off."

On our short walk from the car to Alfred's home I asked him for the first time about his sister. Alfred was silent. I repeated my question. "Well S——, frankly", he said, "I'm worried about Mary." "Mary?" I asked. "Did I say Mary?" said he. "Isn't that curious. I must have been thinking of someone else. I must have been thinking of someone else." We walked on in silence. "S——," he finally said, "I want you to do me a favor. I want you to watch Clara tonight—and tell me if you don't notice something—something a little—er—strange." I promised.

Certainly Clara seemed all right as she ran out on the porch to meet us. Certainly she seemed at first to have changed very little. And yet, as the evening wore on, I caught her once or twice gazing at Alfred with a look in her eyes which I had never before noticed—a look in which intense agony seemed mingled with furious scorn.

Alfred spent the time before dinner in showing me over his house. Here was his fireside—here his beloved books. "These, my dear S——," he said, "are my greatest treasures"—and he carefully handed me several autographed first editions of contemporary authors. "And this", said Alfred, "is Elia, my beloved cat, companion of many a winter night before the fire." It was perhaps unfortunate that Elia should have chosen that particular moment to reach up and claw three deep scratches in her beloved master's outstretched hand. "Damn you!" said the genial twentieth century reincarnation of Charles Lamb. Elia the beloved companion reached the door just ahead of one of her master's first editions. For a moment he seemed once more the dynamic Alfred of college days. But the mood passed.

Dinner, in spite of, or perhaps because of, Alfred's eternal geniality, was a bit strained. Clara said little. There were flashes of the old Clara—but she seemed nervous—unusually so, even for Clara. I was repressed, and ate but little. Alfred's roast pig, which came on in the more convenient

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form of pork chops, failed to tempt me.

After dinner we sat around the fire while Alfred served the precious "egg hot". But even two of those did not particularly stimulate me, and I asked Alfred casually how many "egg hots" it took to produce in one the genial glow which seemed to radiate so cheerfully through the pages of "A Smoker's Holiday". Clara laughed, somewhat bitterly. "As a matter of fact", said Alfred, "I have been compelled to omit alcohol from the ingredients. You may remember, S——, that even in college my stomach"—I remembered Alfred's stomach. I did not carry the subject further.

At eight Alfred left us. "A few fellows", as he said, wanted him to say a few words at a meeting of the Book-lovers' Club.

Clara and I sat for a long while in silence.

"Well, Clara," I finally said, "how does it feel to be the sister of a celebrity?" It was an asinine remark. She made no answer, I cursed my stupidity.

Then, to my intense surprise, she burst into tears—and ran from the room. I waited awkwardly. When she returned I was apparently unconcernedly looking into the fireplace.

"Tom," she said, "forgive me. I'm terribly unstrung. I wanted to talk to you. I must talk to you. And when you started off by referring to Alfred as a 'celebrity'—as though you, too, were proud of him—as though you, too, couldn't see what I was going through—it was more than I could bear."

"Alfred", I replied, "has changed." I waited.

"Yes," she finally said, "Alfred has changed. Alfred is now America's gentle essayist. Alfred is now—" Then the storm broke again. "Oh my God, Tom—"

"How did it happen?" I asked, when she had once more quieted down.

"It began when he was a reporter on the 'Times'," she said. "He was doing very well and loved the job. You remember the kind of man he was—never happy unless he had a thousand things to do. Then, one day, they asked him to write an article for the Sunday edition. And as sort of a joke he did it in the style of Charles Lamb. That was the beginning—in a year he was doing nothing else. It wasn't entirely his fault at first. The articles pleased the public. The newspaper created the figure of Alfred Lambe, gentle essayist, the reincarnation of Charles Lamb—and Alfred played the part. But then—then he began to believe it—he began to think he really was Charles Lamb's descendant. He began to be quaint and genial around the house as well as in public. Tom, if you knew how I hate the very word *genial*—if you knew—but that isn't what's driving me mad, Tom. It's the hypocrisy of the thing. That man—my brother—is nothing but a living lie—his whole life is false. He hates books—he hates cats—he hates tobacco. It makes him ill to smoke a pipe—you notice he never takes more than one puff. He hasn't bought over a can of tobacco in a year. Charles Lamb! Why the thing is driving me mad, I tell you. And Tom, the worst of it is that if I should go mad he would love it—love it, I tell you—because Charles Lamb's sister Mary went mad—and people would say—would say—" The rest ended in an incoherent sob. I sat for a long time staring into the fireplace. Then I went over and put my hand on her shoulder. "Good night, Clara," I said.

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"Good night, Tom," she replied listlessly. "Good night. Forgive me."

"God help you, Clara," I said.

Her only answer was a smile. I left her sitting there smiling. She did not offer to help me on with my coat.

I could not get that scene out of my mind for many months. I wrote her once or twice but received no answer. Gradually I became absorbed in my own affairs and the memory of Alfred and Clara Lambe faded from my mind. Then, one morning, I found on the editorial page of the "Herald" the following:

Those of us who have enjoyed the kindly essays of Alfred Lambe—and who among us has not?—will be greatly grieved to learn that his sister Clara was recently committed to the State Hospital for the Insane. It is perhaps part of the Divine Providence that those who do most to make others' lives happy are themselves most often in great sorrow. Surely Alfred Lambe whose gentle humor and companionable philosophy have made life more enjoyable for all of us might have been spared such suffering as seems to be his lot. And yet, when we remember that other Lamb family tragedy—when we think that to Charles Lamb of England came the identical sorrow that now visits our beloved Alfred—we cannot but feel that somehow God gives these great men strength to meet their hour of agony—strength to rise from such suffering—and strength to pass on to us weaker mortals the great lessons of life. Thank God that America has its Lambe.

PINE SONG

By Mary Carolyn Davies

LIKE a young pine
May I grow:
Only feel
But never know.

Feel the wind
And rain and sun,
See dusk dead
And day begun,

Feel the touch
Of needles fine
Of a swaying
Neighbor pine,

Feel the forest
Awe and wonder
Only never know
That under

Beauty lieth woe.

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MURRAY HILL ON LITTLE BOOKSHOPS

NEW YORK, *December*, 1921.

ONE bright Saturday something like ten years ago, in the days when I was a clerk in a book store, I remember that I happened to ask a fellow clerk how he was going to spend Sunday. His reply was: "Dreading Monday."

I do not cite this joyless young man's attitude toward his occupation as representative of the spirit of all booksellers of that time. But I do recall that in the relation of his heart toward his work he was far from being unique among people in the business of selling books in those days. Indeed, I suppose it is possible that now there are people around here and there selling books who much prefer Sundays and holidays to any other days. But it is nothing short of a remarkable phenomenon, the number of people quite recently got into the book business in the United States who strike you very much as being reluctant to drop bookselling for any length of time for anything else at all.

The other day I ran into a man who a short time ago had opened a bookshop in Buffalo. He was searching for any new books of verse that he might not have known about. He explained that it was the custom in his shop for the staff to gather a little before the hour of opening and have a poetry reading. I had to laugh. That certainly would have been regarded as a funny layout in my day as a bookseller, and the staff doubtless would have demanded time and a half for overtime.

I knew many able and thoroughly industrious booksellers in my day. But I never could understand why the major number of them had ever gone into the book business. They would have been just as able and industrious in some other business. Some of them, I felt sure, would have made excellent waiters. Others inclined me to believe that they could have filled capably and gracefully very decent positions in a bank. And surely the worldly rewards of waiters and bankers were greater than those of booksellers!

I could not perceive in many of the booksellers of that time any particular instinct for reading. They read a little, yes, those confrères of mine (some of them); but not much more, I should say, than other people generally. And mostly what they read was nothing distinguished. They saw, it was fairly plain, no especial connection between the business of selling books and the enjoyment of reading them. And in the cases of most of them, I clearly felt, it did not particularly concern them what kind of book it was that they sold. Though, of course, it was rather gratifying to sell a somewhat expensive one.

Not a few had passed their lives in the book business, and had a remarkable, sometimes an amazing, working knowledge of books. If, for instance, you asked one of them if he had ever heard of such-and-such a book, his answer would be something like this: "Harper and Brothers, 1892, twelve mo., dollar and a half." They had heads like the "Cumulative Index", those veterans. They lived laborious

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days and conceived of sport as something altogether outside of business. I liked the booksellers of this old hard-shell type and esteemed them; and, if I may say so, they seemed (those of them that I knew) not to dislike me. As frequently one or another of them would advise me to get out of the book business. He felt, I gathered, that I was a little over-literary ever to get on there.

Certain romantic figures there were, too: enthusiasts, young men who would have been miserable (and probably very ineffectual) in any atmosphere not of books, who had something of the joy of the creative artist in his work of furthering the fortunes of good literature, and who suffered very real discomfort of mind when (which was more than a little of the time) the exigencies of their business compelled them to traffic in books which to them were worse than valueless. Booksellers of this type, however, in my day were regarded by the trade generally, I fear, as being rather eccentric, fanatical, perhaps a bit defective in mind, and not exactly "practical" salesmen. And maybe at that time they weren't.

Perhaps my sense of the contrast between then and now has inclined me to lopside somewhat the picture of bookselling some years ago. I call to mind a number of very fine figures still going strong in various cities who were with gladness selling books years before I knew what "O. P." meant. Still, in a number of its aspects, there has certainly been a metamorphosis in the book business. And this most interesting thing curiously enough has not, so far as I know, before been the subject of any general survey.

One of the arguments advanced against Prohibition, I remember, was that it would shoot a city full of empty corners. I know of only one bookshop that actually was formerly a saloon, or occupies space which used to be part of a saloon. That is the shop in Greenwich Village established in what was the "back room" of the place where one time John Masefield tended bar. There where of old the Demon Rum prevailed, now presides a fiery-haired young man who has become widely known as the "demon bookseller".

A short time ago a writer in the Chicago "Evening Post" observed that in a book entitled (if he remembered aright) "In the Days of the Comet", Mr. Wells caused the character of the earth's people to be changed by contact with a hitherto unknown gas which streamed from a comet and charged the earth's atmosphere; and he remarked that something of the sort must have hit Chicago, as within the last few years the character of the town had changed in one very important respect—the public was supporting six book stores there today for every one that it allowed to exist a little while ago. That highly commendable gas clearly is not confined to the atmosphere around the nose of Lake Michigan. The September number of "The Publishers' Weekly" printed an article entitled "A Notable Increase in Book Dealers". As statistical evidence of what had happened within the last year, a list of new bookshops was appended to the article. Twenty-nine in number they were. The places: New York; Chicago; Philadelphia; Washington, D. C.; Buffalo; Cincinnati; Shelby, North Carolina; San Diego; Bay Shore, New York; New Milford, Connecticut; St. Louis; Miami, Florida; Atlantic City; Allentown, Pennsylvania; New Orleans; Denver; and Paterson. And a "book

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caravan" had toured districts remote from towns.

I began to think of writing this article a number of weeks ago. At that time I made a round of all the newer bookshops in New York on record in the offices of two leading publishing houses. A few weeks ago I was passing through the neighborhood of West Forty-seventh Street and I discovered three new bookshops that I had never seen nor heard of before. I went into them one after another and learned that each one of them had practically just opened.

In one of these shops I found the proprietor to be a gentleman who until quite recently had been an instructor in English at Harvard, and whose duties there, it appeared, had included collecting books for the university library. While he was specializing in his shop in eighteenth century literature, his stock also included "the best" books of the day. It was his idea that a bookseller had "a function to perform". He was called, as you might say, to aid books that "hadn't had a square deal". An idealist and an amateur, this? One of the other of these shops was a charming place run by a club of New York young women for the semi-centennial fund of an eastern women's college. All help in the shop was voluntary. There was a spirit about of gleefulness and success. I was on my way to visit one of the earliest established and most elaborately equipped of the newer order of small bookshops. The business was begun at New Haven six years ago by a gentleman who was formerly director of the Yale University Press. In the extent of its ambition and the literary character of its stock this shop was an innovation in a college town. I recently read an article by an instructor of youth on the subject of "What Do Boys Know?" It was his conclusion that boys of today have a remarkable knowledge of automobiles, and of little else. It was interesting for me to hear that I'd "be surprised" to know to what extent college boys at New Haven had begun to collect first editions, and how they made of the bookshop there something of a club. The handsome New York quarters of this business begun at New Haven were opened about a year and a half ago, and more recently a branch shop has been established at Princeton. One of the pet subjects of the shop in New York is Dr. Johnson. And one of the principles of the shop is to "push people relatively unknown". Edwin Arlington Robinson, for instance, is a hobby there.

About ten years ago there were three kinds of book stores in this country. The large, handsomely appointed, exhaustively stocked book stores in the centre of the city. And in this division I would include the admirable and elaborate book departments of big department stores. Then there were the dealers handling exclusively rare books, choice items, fine bindings, first editions, association volumes, and such things. The Tiffanys of the book trade, they. But they could cater only to book buyers of considerable means. Then, the second-hand book stores. Their windows were amusing: paper covered joke books, dream books, and volumes on phrenology and how to tell fortunes with cards—these, amid a queer medley of worn tomes, were displayed there. Yes; there were, of course, too, some few bookshops confined to their special subjects: architecture, books in the French language, books of Jewish interest, and so on. The book stores of all these various kinds continue to go on very much as before. Except that (and wondrous

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thing!) you are likely to see a soiled copy of THE BOOKMAN or "The London Mercury" where you used to see a dream book. But the bright little specialty bookshop which now has come into so great a vogue hardly existed.

A chatty newspaper story has appeared now and then about one or another of the picturesque little shops recently opened up. And some of the ideas and practical problems of the "small book store" have been discussed a bit in the booksellers' trade journals. But one or another of these shops cannot now be viewed as an isolated matter. In their multitude and in the unity of their purpose they have assumed the proportions of a movement, comparable in significance, one might perhaps say, to the Little Theatre movement.

The first, as well as I can discover, of these little shops to be dependent upon books alone, was one across the street from the Little Church Around the Corner. It opened in 1909. In its ideals it was identical with the great number of shops of its kind today. In 1916 it failed. But a couple of years ago it arose again, farther uptown, and now is flourishing like the green bay tree. Or, at least, the young man who had the earlier shop and who manages the new one, is the same. The second venture of this description, according to my information, was in the neighborhood of Washington Square, opened in 1911. Through various vicissitudes it has continued on to present prosperity.

The little bookshop early took a hold on Greenwich Village, when the great buzz of bizarre business activity there began. As in the innumerable tea rooms that sprouted up, the bookshop scheme of decoration was sometimes of delirious post-futurist design. And the displays were of "The Liberator", "The Birth Control Review", and everything going on psycho-this and psycho-that. Also a magazine for "endæmonists". They? Why, neo-Epicureans, ultra-Hedonists, and beings of that sort. But the Village has lately changed more than many people know. A Greenwich Village little bookshop today has very much the same stock as a little bookshop anywhere else. One of the bookshops on the Village's Main Street features children's books. And if you want to get anything but a first-rate book there now I think you'll have to go outside of Greenwich Village to find it—or at least to get it openly. In one of the most successful shops there it suddenly occurred to me not long ago that there was nothing but the most first-rate sort of books in sight. From curiosity I asked the bookseller if he had a copy of a book, an innocent enough volume, but of rather namby-pamby character—quite the kind of thing which not long ago was stigmatized by the epithet "best seller". The bookseller presented somewhat the effect of first glancing cautiously up and down the street. Then he produced the book from beneath a counter and handed it to me with a manner which seemed to say: "Slip it under your coat quick." I might (such appeared to be the atmosphere of the transaction) have been buying some hootch.

A good many of our modern little bookshops are run by women. I have been told that considerable impetus was given to the movement of women into the book business by A. Edward Newton, who in an article about four years ago advocated bookselling as the ideal profession for women. The first independent women's bookshop was established in New York in 1916. At the outset the venture yielded only fifteen dollars a week for the two or-

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ganizers. Help was given by volunteers. This shop has expanded far beyond all initial expectation, and has recently moved into decidedly commodious quarters in the Yale Club building. Nine young women now assist in the service, and several of these continue to be content to work without salary. The shop has affiliations with seven or eight other shops throughout the country, one in New Orleans, another in Minneapolis. It provides these shops distant from book centres with late importations on consignment. It cultivates the idea of public work equally with the literary side of the business. Served various war boards with government pamphlets and other material during the war. Seeks to induce various publications to work on a plan to treat books as a public necessity. It likes the chances to be of service to students in special subjects, undertakes to arrange lectures, and exhibitions of prints, textiles, bindings, bookplates, and specimens of modern printing, for clubs and churches. It now and then arranges for the decoration of a tea room. And is active in three other functions of the modern little bookshop.

Though our little bookshop is new with us, it is not new on the other side of the Atlantic. Some time before the war I remember climbing the murky stairs of the tiny Poetry Bookshop somewhere behind Museum Street in London to listen to an afternoon poetry reading. Readings, talks by authors, and literary entertainments have recently became a regular part of the book business, and particularly of the little bookshop business, from New York to San Francisco. And very stimulating to the business, I understand, these things have been found to be. Now and then a little bookshop publishes a volume or two in a pleasantly uncommercial way. And various little bookshops have come to be headquarters for, or at least regular ports of call of, divers authors. One knows where it is likely that he may find William McFee when he comes off the sea, and where Alfred Kreymborg when he is in New York. The social life of the neighborhood sort of bookshop is, indeed, becoming a good deal of a thing. I heard the other day of a little bookshop which is contemplating serving tea and coffee in the afternoon. Open in the evenings, some of them, they gather in their habitués in as friendly a way as small town cigar stores.

When you go about and look into the matter you discover that the great majority of little bookshops have set up within the last two or three years. It is interesting to learn what the people who run them did before. In Buffalo a wealthy man in the oil business recently retired after twenty-five years to open a little bookshop, where he has an "old cronies' room", cultivates browsing and contact with customers. A young woman who has the most glorious bob in Greenwich Village, now proprietor of a little bookshop, formerly taught "æsthetic physical culture", and later wandered about the Village selling her own cigarettes. When I set out to look into little bookshops I went into two, one after another, and found in each a young woman who but a short time before had been a writer on the staff of the New York "Evening Post". One of these shops I was told was owned by a group of "younger married women of New York" of money and position. I know a young woman in Chicago, a very active literary critic for a great newspaper there, who also runs a little bookshop. And one of the most interesting small bookshops in New York

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is run by a man who has done a picturesque variety of things: run a farm, worked for missionary societies, written books for other people.

The little bookshop is, of necessity for one thing, a specialty shop. The specialty sometimes is the result merely of a very distinctive taste in literature. The other day in a shop much inclined to contemporary English novelists, poets, and essayists, I was told by the young woman there that the stock was limited to her husband's prejudices. His prejudices have brought him a substantial following. A unique enterprise even for New York City is the drama bookshop, devoted exclusively to the sale of plays and books on the theatre and the drama, and an institution which engages largely in the giving of all sorts of information pertaining to its subject. A peculiarly engaging feature of the shop is the shelf of children's plays. A recent addition to highly specialized bookshops in New York is one devoted entirely to orientalia, where some of the greatest scholars in the world call in, sometimes to meet each other for the first time, and add to the membership of what the proprietor calls their "little club". This, he rejoices to think, "lifts the place above a commercial atmosphere altogether".

A juvenile bookshop is not a twentieth century project. "Juvenile Library" appeared on the sign of a London bookseller whose business career began in 1740. By 1800 there were at least three other "juvenile libraries" in London. Charles and Mary Lamb wrote their "Tales from Shakespeare" and "Poetry for Children" for a "Juvenile and School Library" kept by the wife of William Godwin, best known as the father of Mary Shelley. In Philadelphia there were several juvenile book stores very early in the nineteenth century. But the new idea in children's bookshops is the effort to reach the children directly. The first of the modern children's bookshops was opened in Boston in 1915. The stock ranged from toy books to standard editions for young men and women. As in other little bookshops, a special information service was extended. Within the last couple of years children's bookshops, with their amusing dwarf chairs and tables, have been opened in New York, Chicago, and Seattle. And just the other day the publisher of a well-known children's magazine opened in New York a "Book House" for children, where you may get the latest toy book or a de luxe "Arabian Nights".

People who run specialty bookshops tell you a number of interesting things. The owner of a little bookshop, for one thing, usually wants his shop to stay a small bookshop. He wins his customers' confidence; they put themselves into his hands, and are grateful to him. He does not have to crawl; he is the master of his profession; those who enter "can be nasty somewhere else". There is very little risk in the specialty bookshop, it seems, of losing money; absolutely free credit usually is given; and everybody pays up. The little bookshops cooperate with one another: getting books from each other; sending customers to each other. And, finally, there seems to be something like a conspiracy among them against, as one of them put it, "best sellers in a bad sense". "But," I asked, "if someone wanted a copy of Harold Bell Wright wouldn't you get it for him?"

"Well," the young woman replied, "we might get it for him, but we'd inquire into his motives."

MURRAY HILL

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WHAT'S IN A PLACE?

By Alexander Black

With Sketches by Esther Brock Bird

OF course, as a person born in New York City I cannot pretend to forget that there is something disqualifying about being native when one is still to be found in the place of his nativity. It is true that a born New Yorker shares the common acquittal as to complicity in such a matter. Even those who admit that I might better have been born somewhere else do not go so far as to suggest that the hazard of being born in New York is one which I could have avoided, though facing the risk of ending where I began is remarked with an effect of indicating questionable taste. It does not avail that a born New Yorker may have a wholesome sense of the sins he has inherited—perhaps even of those to which he has given nourishment. There is an American implication that being discovered where you were born violates a kind of code. It simply isn't done.

A sense of this affects me poignantly when I find myself at one of those dinners, so frequent in New York, that celebrate some remote county of my own state or some noble other state of the Union. It is at one of these festivals that one realizes most sharply the imperativeness of unfolding and of being remarked in a region other than his birthplace. When I sit at a banqueting board and hear the orators extol the county or the state that produced them; when I hear those impassioned allusions to a sky that is bluer, grass that is greener, and water that is wetter than any other on God's fair footstool, I feel depressed and inferior. When I hear about the old swimming hole, and realize that I had nothing but the Atlantic ocean; when I must confess to myself that I never was chased by a constable but only by a policeman; especially when it is borne in upon me that one cannot feel or say these things about a place when he is there, that only when he is properly somewhere else can he be permitted to express his natural emotions of native pride, I experience a sheepish pang. If I had gone forth or come forth like others; if I had heard the far call and had seen the beckoning finger; if that place-appeal to the imagination which constitutes so vital an element of adventure had not come from my own island—if I had not found romance where Adam found his, in the home lot—I too might have enjoyed this birthright of a distant birthplace.

No apology is offered for the personal digression, not only because it sets forth a really important complex, but because it seems to bear a relation to the matter here specifically in mind: namely, certain new (and very old) debates as to the native, the "characteristic", in American life. It might

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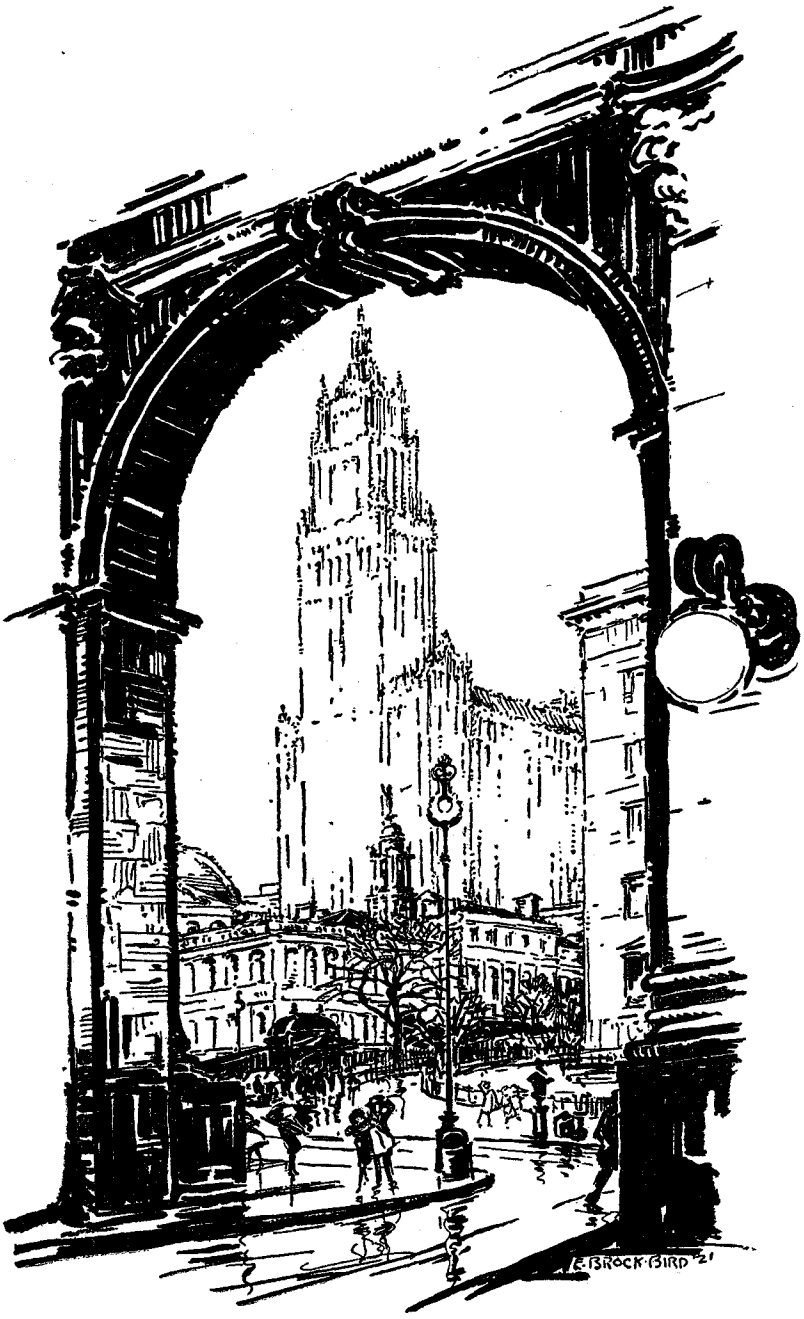

City Hall and Woolworth Building, New York, seen through the arch of the Municipal Building

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pay to pause for consideration of the migrating impulse as a factor in sociology. But that is another complex. It is essential to stick to the quarrel point. If you had been born in New York, and were still there, the quarrel point would hold you; the fact that New York, for example, is not "characteristic" enough, and that its failure to be characteristic is somehow mixed up with its failure to be original, would acquire for you, in the course of time, the interest of an accusatory revelation.

America was very young when it formed the habit of thinking about its "difference". There was no comfort for a visitor who did not admit, or proclaim, and then expound this difference. Being different became a preoccupation, sometimes a mania, often a business. The theory that we were essentially different introduced a heavy strain. Only being enormously busy could assure a continued difference. If being American was being different, than not being different in any conspicuous or essential quality was not being American. You will see at a glance how intricate life could become under an obligation so insistent.

It is as when we say to the humorist that he must be not only as funny as before, but that to seem as funny he must be funnier than ever. American efficiency remarks very sternly to the youth that to do as well he must do better. We can't simply *stay* different. We must hustle, or when we are not looking our difference will have melted, or dried up, or stiffened, or somehow ceased to be different.

Inevitably our difference moved westward and then it seems to have begun, like the centre of population, to roll back. Inevitably, too, this produced an uneven thickness in the difference. It was the paradox that in new spots it was thicker, as of something laid on with a dripping brush. And very early began the quarrel as to which places were entitled to be regarded as most American. The quarrel was not introduced by an outlander. It was our own affair. We always told the outlander about it when he came. This was necessary, because without information he was as likely as not, when he stepped ashore, to think he had landed in America.

"Sh—sh!" someone was sure to mutter to the outlander, with an admonishing gesture, "don't make the mistake of thinking that *this* is America. The real America is westward. Wait a while."

There was the possibility that the newcomer might assume that going westward as far as he could he should find the utmost American, and it became a kind of humiliation, having reached a delightfully sophisticated other coast, to discover that the realest America was somewhere in between—that he had walked over it without knowing, or had slept through it on a night train. Our visitors have usually been extremely polite. Most of them have shown a disposition to feel what they ought to feel; and it must often be a bewildering if not a downright painful thing while wishing to be nice about it to suffer an uncertainty so large in sheer miles, and to fumble for the essential in a matter which the native can indicate with a gesture without being adept in indicating by any decipherable diagram.

It is to be suspected that our visitors have often gone away with a secreted conviction that our most marked collective difference is this national anxiety about difference. What-

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ever may come to the onlooker by oral communication, there can be no question that our written confessions would convey to him an amazing solicitude as to regional integrity. The European need not cross the sea to know that Americans worry about their originality and especially about its apportionment. He needs no physical contact to know that we are immensely concerned not only about our title deeds to humor and frankness and push and difference, but about the order of geographical precedence in these matters. We like to think that we have obliterated effete lines of social caste, yet we are acutely jealous, according to many of the critics, of a decent ordering in our "originality" relations. If complete originality must have the head of the table, the assumption seems to be that only an unrelenting critical Burke can accomplish an orderly seating.

Thirty years ago I read a learned opinion to the effect that trying to "get" American life was like trying to estimate a landscape through the window of a rapidly moving train. The comment was not made by a foreigner. It was made by an American writer who was, I am sure, profoundly concerned over the need to transcribe the whole of America into something decorously and even devoutly "native". Evidently he believed that "the great American novel" would represent a huge encyclopædic cross-section of the republic, and he resented the squirming activity of the "material". How can you make a cross-section of a thing that squirms? The implication was that Europe would hold still while you sketched it, but that nothing satisfactory could be done with a subject that refused to be decently quiet, that was restless like a baby in a photograph gallery.

The comment I am recalling had been made before. It has been repeated many times since. It will be offered again. Frenchmen say some equivalent thing about Paris. Once Paris was fixed. Now landmarks are disappearing. Naturally landmarks were always disappearing and all eras have been eras of transition. But this suggestion is repugnant to a certain sort of person—the sort of person who can accept foreground evidence of change but is offended by the thought that change may always have been busy. The cautious find a prop in the static, and these are often encouraged by historians, who sometimes seem willing to let us believe that certain periods were wholly without movement. One gets the impression that historians often hold back movement until the proper place in a chapter. To give human evolution this jerky advance is plainly preferred as adding "snap" to its drama.

At all events, persons of a standardizing habit want images to stay very still, to be not only very still but to give assurance that they are not by any chance to move unduly and disqualify the record. If anything is missing in report of American life it is quite possible to believe that it is not because American life is in transition, but because this uproariously funny thought about transition and its disqualifying effects has managed to creep into even creative minds.

And while we wonder why there is no possible thrill in the transitional, why only the settled can be described, here comes the accusation that New York must be dismissed as too settled to be characteristic. Since the transitional won't stay still to be written, and the settled isn't native enough to be written, the dilemma is surely complete. Chicago too is accused of hard-

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ening into unavailability. The truth is that Chicago is as unlike Mobile as New York is unlike Seattle. This may be admitted. It is the small town, of New England, of the south, of the middle west, of the Coast, that is aspersed by the uniformity label—or crowned as "characteristic".

You may be assured that it is only the untraveled—or the merely train-traveled—who believe that small towns of any section have a flat uniformity. It is always an alien race of whose members we are quick to say, "they are all alike", and it is the unknown neighbor who sinks into type obscurity. Really to know a town, big or little, is to experience the displacement of type by personality. To have studied American cities from San Francisco to Savannah; to have felt the throb under the careless mask of small towns; to have haunted hundreds of villages that are as different as men, that are too busy with human problems to know anything about type obligations, is to find fresh absurdity in the solemn or flippant application of type labels.

The astounding thing is not blunder as to likeness or unlikeness in American centres but the pretense that these relativities have some bearing on the duties of art. One might wonder whether this is a purely American pretense. No painter or novelist who describes London apologizes because London is not native as Normanby is native. No violent unlikeness of Paris as compared with Carcassonne invalidates the Frenchness of anything written about the capital. "Madame Bovary" is not accused of having failed to reflect Bordeaux. Mr. Hardy may choose Wessex with an impunity equal to that yielded to Mr. Conrad in his wanderings through the seven seas.

American writers have shown a disposition to accept region as an opportunity rather than as an obligation, yet American writers have repeatedly encountered the critical reminder that our literature might have been more racy of the soil if it had been more place-conscious. Again and again writers have been urged to consider whether they might not be more native in effect by taking a train; unless it had been agreed that they were correctly placed, in which case they were attacked, sometimes violently, for daring to move. Awkwardly, Walt Whitman liked Broadway, and could select so vulgar and metropolitan a subject as the Williamsburg ferry. Poe also was foolishly New Yorkish; Howells, who should have been warned by tradition, did not go back to Martin's Ferry but to New York; and O. Henry actually pretended that New York was a mine of American romance. Of course the arch offenders were Bret Harte and Henry James who moved all the way to London. These, doubtless, should be set aside as beyond the pale.

Although, as I have suggested, my ambiguous position as a born New Yorker may be disqualifying, I venture the admission that New York does not seem to me to be very "original". To be sure, I have never visited any town, small or large, that did not in some degree reflect the influence of other towns. The trouble is that New York has been indicted for going too far in reflecting the influence of Europe. That imputation is always shocking. Yet some town has to bear the responsibility of filtering foreign influences, and even a town thus engaged must present some sort of a spectacle. It still remains a human circumstance such as it is. I have heard it said that New York cannot be considered as "American" because it it "full of foreigners". But even as a

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Washington Square Arch, New York

place full of foreigners it is a place in America and the foreigners are all persons. For that matter, the United States has always been full of foreigners. The Pilgrim Fathers were foreigners to a man. The image of the United States that shines before the world would be a trifle ironic if a good many of our towns were not "full of foreigners". If founders of the republic could be foreigners—well, the foreigner notion is pretty well answered in our literature if not always in our parlor civics.

New York's smug insularity, like the insularity of older Rome or newer London, is not less a reality because it is exasperating or because its resemblances are unfortunate. If a village in Iowa is "characteristic"—that is, like something else—a Broadway is whatever it is for the same simple human reasons. Because both are states of mind the trite and the unique

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establish their individual blend. As for New York's assumption that it is the centre of things, I admit that this expresses one of its most commonplace habits. Only one who has ransacked the United States can know, of fact, how completely trite this trait is. There is nothing unrighteous about the assumption. It is natural; perhaps it is inherently indispensable. An individual or a group that does not intuitively accept the idea of being at the centre is probably abnormal and open to suspicion. Very likely the claim or the admission, to be graceful, needs an appropriate tone of voice. The artifice we call modesty has its grades. The big place needs a big modesty, and it doesn't always have it.

New York's disqualifying reflections of Europe are indicated as particularly serious as an art consideration. "Difference" means above all else difference from Europe. The eagerness to find parts of America that are sufficiently different from Europe can, as I have suggested, reach the fervidness of a patriotic mania. Since we have established the principle of measuring individual Americanism in percentages, it may be that towns will suffer the same estimate, and that if a town in Connecticut, or Georgia, or Oregon shows a failed percentage it will become a perilous thing to get itself written.

I should not overlook the fact that to "sell" ourselves abroad we must have the expected seasoning. The movies, finding a profitable foreign market, adroitly perpetuated an obsolete wildness in western scenes. Europe is not to be amused by anything American that is not more than a little raw. Yet I have not discovered that the best interpreters of life in America have done their writing with an eye on Europe.

Probably there is no real danger that any novelist who is worth his salt will be made place-conscious in an inhibiting degree by any grotesque maunderings about nativeness, though the novelist may find diversion in studying place-consciousness as a factor. It may be that as a factor he might find it to have the weight of more than a joke. In his serious moods he may conclude that the peering, puttering analyses of subject, the apprehensive discrimination between this and that spot, this and that character, as perfectly or imperfectly "American", was never more futile, never more antipathetic to the hungers of the world than at this hour.

The novelist may have his personal regret that a town is not more original, if originality seems to him important, just as he might lament the same thing about a man. Yet it may not seem to him imperative that he should write about original towns or original men only. He may have awakened to the fact that the important thing is not that the subject should be original but that the artist should be original —by being honest, for example. He may have realized that complete honesty is always original; that if no two thumb prints are alike, no two soul prints are alike either. If he saw the highest importance not in difference but in truth, he might set to work trying to understand the life at hand, wherever it was, and trying to convey a sense of that life to lives elsewhere. He might do this upon a theory that it is more creative to tell the utter truth about a commonplace man than merely to elaborate the divergences of a "different" one—because he thought the commonplaceness of misunderstanding to be the ultimate ugliness, either in patriotism or in art. Naturally, most men and most places are commonplace.

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Real pictures of either have the rarity of a highly elusive gem. While men, outwardly at least, remain much the same from year to year, expressions of truth will ever be changing, ever flashing new phases of beauty.

Great art has never begun in a feverish search for something "native". If great art has had heat, that quality has shown in the white intensity of its communication. The poet doesn't shun the clouds because they have been "done", or because they haven't a "native" quality. The kind of mind that can separate human elements of material, not as a matter of personal choice, but as if there could be a fundamental differentiation of verity, is the kind of mind that can rack itself to determine whether the novel is "a true art form". True art form! Maybe we need someone with the exalted energy of a Nazarene to break the face of dogma, to point out vigorously that the human creature is It, that humanities, in Russia or on Broadways, give a grey cast to every other possible consideration, including those of geography and of art. If a man has a passion boiling in him it does not matter whether he crouches in a rice field of the south or runs a steel cage in a skyscraper. If a woman's nerves go to smash it doesn't matter whether her wash tub and her babies are in a ranch house or in a tenement. The bitter is not more nor less real by being "native", or in the right county.

In short, native novels will continue to be written by artists who can forget long enough that they are themselves native, who can forget long enough that they or their subjects must be one hundred per cent., who can forget boundaries, "art forms", anxieties about originality or "the great American novel". The real scene of every creative work is the heart of the artist; nothing is real to him until he has found it there; which is to say that the ultimate need of the artist is not merely that he should "know his subject" and express a place. It is that he should, if he has the luck, know himself and express humanity. A platitude, naturally. But the elemental is never "original". This may explain why self-conscious eagerness so often misses it altogether.

VALPARAISO

By Milton Raison

THE mountains are like crouching camels
And you, a toy between their feet,
And though your insolence untrammels
The anxious confines of the street—
You have no other way to creep,
So on the hills your climbing's done.
You'll never find the sea asleep
Like crouching camels in the sun.

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OUT OF MY NEWSPAPER DAYS

By Theodore Dreiser

III: "RED" GALVIN

WHILE I was on the "Globe-Democrat" there was also there a sort of racetrack tout, gambler, amateur detective, and political and police hanger on generally, who was a purveyor of news not only to our police and political man but to the sporting and other editors, a sort of Jack-of-all-news or tipster. From the first he was both ridiculous and disgusting to me: loud, bold, uncouth, the kind of creature that begins as bootblack or newsboy and winds up as the president of a racing association or baseball team. He claimed to be Irish, having a taciturn freckled Irish face, red hair, grey eyes, and rather large hands and feet; in reality he was one of those South Russian Jews who look so much like the Irish as to be frequently mistaken for them. He had had, probably, the wit to see that it would be of more advantage to him to be thought Irish than Jewish, and so had changed his name of Shapirowitz to that of Galvin—"Red" Galvin. One of the most offensive things about him to me was that his clothes were loud, just such clothes as touts and gamblers affect who wish to be au fait in their world—hard, bright-checked suits of a more or less reddish-brown color, bright yellow shoes, ties of the most radiant hues, hats of a clashing sonorousness, and rings and pins and cuff links glistening with diamonds or rubies. He was the kind of man who is convinced that clothes and a little money make the man, as they quite do in such instances.

But Galvin was even worse than this, having the social and moral point of view of both the hawk and the buzzard. Mitchell began to use him as an assistant to Hazard, Bellairs, Bennett, Hartung, and myself: that is, as a man who would supply the paper with stories which we would rewrite. I used to laugh at him, more or less to his face, as being a freak, which of course generated only the kindliest of feelings between us. The truth probably is that we took a violent dislike to each other on sight.

I wondered how it was that he could make anything out of this newspaper connection since, as Hartung and others told me, he could not write, or wrote so badly that it was necessary to rewrite his stuff almost entirely; but his great recommendation to Mitchell and others was that he could glean news of things where other reporters could not, among the police, the detective politicians, and the like, with whom he was evidently hand-in-hand. By reason of his underworld connections many amazing details as to one form and another of political and social jobbery came to light, which doubtless made him invaluable to a city editor.

Be that as it may, when some of his stories were given to me we were thrown into immediate and almost clashing contact. Because of his cyn-

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ical leers and unabashed bravado, when he knew he could not write two good sentences in order, I frequently wanted to brain him but took it out in smiles and dry cynical comments. His favorite expressions were "See?" and "I sez tuh him" or "He sez tuh me", always accompanied by a contemptuous wave of a berubied hand or a pugnaciously protruded chin. One of the chief reasons why I hated him was that Dick Wood told me he had once cynically remarked that newspaper work was a beggar's game at best and that *writers grew on trees*, meaning that they were so numerous as to be negligible and not worth considering. Just the same I made the best of these trying situations when I had to do over a story of his, extracting all the information I could and then writing it out, which resulted in some of his stories receiving excellent space in the day's news and made him all the more pugnacious and sure of himself, at the same time making him of more value to the paper.

However, in due time I left the "Globe-Democrat" for the "Republic". One day, greatly to my astonishment and irritation, he appeared at the North Seventh Street station as a full-fledged reporter, having been given a regular position by Mitchell and set to doing police work. To my surprise and chagrin I noticed at once that he was, as if by reason of past intimacies of which I had not the slightest idea, far more en rapport with the various sergeants and the captain than I had ever dreamed of being. It was "Charlie" here and "Cap" there. But what "riled" me most was that he gave himself all the airs of a newspaper man proper, swaggering about and talking of this, that, and the other story he had written (I having done some of them myself!). The crowning blow was that he was soon closeted with the captain in his room, strolling in and out of that sanctum as if it were his private demesne and giving me the impression of being in touch with realms and deeds of which I was never to have the slightest knowledge. This made me apprehensive lest in these intimacies tales and mysteries should be unfolded that would have their first light in the pages of the "Globe-Democrat" and so leave me to be laughed at as one who could not get the news. I watched the "Globe-Democrat" more closely than ever before for evidence of such treachery on the part of the police as would result in a "scoop" for him, at the same time redoubling my interest in such items as might appear. The consequence was that on more than one occasion I made good stories out of things which Mr. Galvin had evidently dismissed as worthless; and now and then a case into which I had inquired at the station house appeared in the "Globe-Democrat" with details which I had not been able to obtain and concerning which the police had insisted they knew nothing.

But for a long time, by dint of energy and a rather plain intimation to all concerned that I would not tolerate false dealing, I managed not only to hold my own but occasionally to give my confrère a good beating, and that with considerable flare—as when, for one instance, a negro girl in one of those crowded alleys was cut almost to shreds by an ex-lover armed with a razor, for reasons which, as my personal investigation proved, were highly romantic. It seemed that some seven or eight months before this same girl and her assailant had been living together in Cairo, Illinois, and that subsequently the lover, who was wildly fond of her, became suspicious,

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and finally satisfying himself that she was faithless set a trap to catch her. He was a coal passer or stevedore, working now on one boat and now on another plying the Mississippi between New Orleans and St. Louis. One day when she thought he was on a river steamer for a week or two he burst in upon her and found her with another man. Death would have been her portion, as well as that of her lover, had it not been for the interference of friends which permitted the pair to escape.

As the cutting on this occasion proved, he had set out to follow her, for this was apparently a case of driving romance or passion. To this end he returned to his task as stevedore, working his way thus from one river city to another. When he came to any such city as Memphis, Natchez, New Orleans, Vicksburg, or St. Louis, he made it a point to disguise himself as a pedler selling trinkets and charms, and in this capacity walked the crowded negro sections of these cities calling his wares. One of these trips finally brought him to St. Louis, and here on this late August afternoon, ambling up this stifling little alley, he finally encountered her. As he was calling out his charms and trinkets, the girl put her head out of the doorway, and on the instant he was upon her. Dropping his tray he drew a razor and crisscrossed and slashed her cheeks and lips, arms, legs, back, and sides, so much so that when I arrived at the City Hospital she was unconscious and her life despaired of. Great cuts all of a foot in length and an inch deep had been made in her thighs, back, and arms. But the lover, abandoning his tray of cheap jewelry, which was later brought to the station house and exhibited, had made good his escape and was not captured, during my stay in St. Louis at least. Her present paramour had also gone his way, leaving her to suffer alone.

Curiously, owing possibly to Galvin's underestimate of its romance, this story received only a scant stick as a low dive cutting affray in the "Globe-Democrat", while in the "Republic" (and I am not seeking to overestimate my skill) I had turned it into a negro romance which received all of a column. Into it I had tried to put the hot river water fronts of the different cities which the lover had visited, the crowded negro quarters of Memphis, New Orleans, Cairo, the bold negro life which two truants such as the false mistress and her lover might enjoy. I had tried to suggest the singsong sleepiness of the levee boat landings, the stevedores at their lazy labors, the idle, dreamy character of the slow-moving boats. Even an old negro refrain appropriate to a trinket pedler had been introduced:

Eyah—Rings, Pins, Buckles, Ribbons!

Somehow the barbaric character of the alley in which it occurred, lined with rickety curtain-hung shacks and swarming with the idle, crooning, shuffling negro life of the south, appealed to me intensely. An old black mammy with a yellow-dotted kerchief over her head, who kept talking of "disha Gawge" and "disha Sam" and "disha Maquatia" (the girl), moved me almost to a poetic frenzy. From a long enduring crowd of blacks that hung about the vacated shack of the lovers after the girl had been taken away, I picked up the main thread of the story, the varying characteristics of the girl and her lover, and then having visited the hospital and seen the victim I hurried to the office and endeavored to convince Wandell that I had an important story. At first he

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was not inclined to think so, negro life being a little too low for local consumption, but after I had entered upon some of the details he told me to go ahead. I wrote it out as well as I could, and it went in on the second page. The next day, meeting Galvin, after having first examined the "Globe" to see what had been done there, I beamed on him cheerfully and was met with a snarl of rage.

"Yuh think yuh're a hell of a feller, dontcha, because yuh can sling a little ink? Yuh think yuh've pulled off sompin swell. Well, say, yuh're not near as much as yuh think yuh are. Wait an' see. I've been up against wordy boys like yuh before, an' I can work all around 'em. All yuh guys do is to get a few facts an' then pad 'em up. Yuh never get the real stuff, never", and he snapped his fingers under my nose. "Wait'll we get a real case some time, yuh an' me, an' I'll show yuh sompin."

He glared at me with hard, cold, revengeful eyes, and, truth to tell, he then and there put a lusty fear into me from which I never really recovered, although at the time I merely smiled.

"Is that so? That's easy enough to say, now that you're trimmed, but I guess I'll be right there when the time comes."

"Aw, go to hell!" he snarled, and I walked off smiling but beginning to wonder nervously just what it was he was going to do to me, and how soon.

The sequel to this, however, is what I have been wishing to narrate from the first. Some time before this, say four or five months (when I was still working for the "Globe-Democrat"), there had occurred on the Missouri Pacific, about one hundred and fifty miles west of St. Louis and between that city and Kansas City, another story or news item which interested me quite as much at the time, although I had nothing to do with it. According to the reports telegraphed from the scene of the crime, seven lusty and daring bandits, all heavily armed and as desperate as any bandits might well be, had held up a seven or eight car Pullman and baggage express train between one and two of the morning at a lonely spot on the road's route. After overawing the passengers in each of the several cars and compelling the engineer and fireman to dismount, uncouple the engine, and run it a hundred paces ahead, the bandits had ordered the two latter to return and help break open the door of the express car. This they did, using a stick of dynamite or giant powder handed them by one of the bandits. And then both were made to enter the express car, where, under the eye of one of the bandits and despite the presence of the express messenger who was armed yet overawed, they were compelled to blow open the safe and carry forth between twenty and thirty thousand dollars in bills and coin which they deposited on the ground in sacks and packages for the dear bandits. Then, if you please, they were forced to reenter their engine, back it up and couple it to the train, and then proceed upon their journey, leaving the bandits to gather up their booty and depart.

Naturally such a story was of great interest to St. Louis, as well as to all the other great cities so near at hand. It smacked of the lawlessness of the 'forties, when pack train and stage-coach robberies were the rule and not the exception. All banks, express companies, railroads, and financial institutions generally were intensely interested. The whole front page was given to this deed, and it was worth

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it, although during my short career in journalism in this region no less than seven and perhaps as many as a dozen amazing train robberies took place in as many months in the region bounded by the Mississippi and the Rockies, the Canadian line and the Gulf. Four or five of them occurred within a hundred miles of St. Louis.

The truth about this particular robbery was that there had not been any seven bandits at all but just one, and he an ex-railroad hand turned robber for this occasion only, and armed, as subsequent developments proved, with but a brace of revolvers, each containing six shots, and a few sticks of fuse-prepared giant powder! Despite the glowing preliminary newspaper account which made of this a most desperate and murderous affair, there had been no prowling up and down the aisles of the cars by various bandits all armed to the teeth, as a number of passengers insisted (among whom, by the way, was the governor of the state, his lieutenant governor, who by virtue of his office was also head of the state militia, as well as several officers of his staff, all returning from a military banquet or feast somewhere). Nor was there any shooting at passengers who ventured to peer out into the darkness—just this one lone bandit, who was very busy up in front attending to the robbing. What made this story all the more ridiculous in the light of later developments was that at the time the train stopped in the darkness and these various imaginary bandits began to shout and fire shots, and even, as it was claimed, to rob the passengers of their watches, pins, purses, and the like, these worthies of the state—or so it was claimed in guffawing newspaper circles afterward—crawled under their seats or into their berths and did not emerge until the train was well on its way once more. Long before the true story of the lone bandit came out, the presence of the governor and his staff at the time was well known and had lent considerable lustre to the deed and strengthened the interest which later attached to the story of the real bandit.

Be that as it may (and the St. Louis newspaper files for 1893 will show whether or not I am correct), this lone bandit, who, as it was later indisputably proved, was nothing more than an ex-farm hand turned railroad hand and then "baggage-smasher" at a small station, had, owing to an interesting strain of love and poverty into which his life had at this time drifted, plotted this astounding coup, which, once all its peculiar details were revealed, seemed to fascinate the entire American public from coast to coast. The psychology that could cause a lone individual to undertake such an astounding task was uppermost in everybody's mind at the time, including that of our local city editors, and to the task of unraveling it they now bent their every effort.

When the robbery occurred I was working for the "Globe-Democrat"; later, when it was discovered by detectives working for the railroad and the express company who the star robber was, I was connected with the "Republic". Returning early one afternoon from some unimportant assignment, I was shown a telegram from some backwoods town in Missouri—let us say Bald Knob, just for a name's sake—that one Lem Rollins (that name will do as well as any other), an ex-employee of the Missouri Pacific, had that day or the day before been arrested by detectives for the road and express company for the crime, and that a search of his room had revealed most of the stolen money; also, that

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because of various other facts with which he had been confronted he had already confessed that he and he alone had been guilty of the express robbery. The dispatch added that he had shown the detectives where the remainder of the money lay hidden, that this very afternoon he would be en route to St. Louis, scheduled to arrive over the St. Louis and San Francisco, and that he would be confined in the county jail there until sentenced. Imagine the excitement. The burglar had not told how he had accomplished this great feat, and here he was now en route to St. Louis, and might be met and interviewed on the train coming in, provided the right connection could be made. From a news point of view the story was immense.

When I came in Wandell exclaimed: "I'll tell you what you do, Dreiser—Lord! I thought you wouldn't come back in time! Here's a St. Louis and San Francisco time table; according to it you can take a local that leaves here at two-fifteen and get as far as this place, Pacific, where the incoming express stops. It's just possible that the 'Globe' and the other papers haven't got hold of this yet—maybe they have, but whatever happens, we won't get licked, and that's the main thing."

He cautioned me to hurry but I, being intensely interested in the tale and anxious that the paper should do at least as well as the others, needed no such caution. I bustled down to the Union Station but when I asked for a ticket to Pacific the slightly disturbing question, "Which road?" was asked.

"Are there two?" I asked breathlessly.

"Sure, Missouri Pacific, and St. Louis and San Francisco."

"They both go to the same place, do they?"

"Yes; they meet there."

"Which train leaves first?"

"St. Louis and San Francisco. It's waiting now."

I hurried to it, but the thought of this other road in from Pacific troubled me. Suppose the bandit should be on the other train instead of on this! I consulted with the conductor when he came for my ticket and was told that Pacific was the only place at which these two roads met, one going west and the other southwest from there. "Good," I thought. "Then he is certain to be on this line."

But now another thought came to me: supposing reporters from other papers were aboard, especially from the "Globe-Democrat"! I rose and walked forward to the smoker, and there, to my great disgust and nervous dissatisfaction, was Galvin, red-headed, serene, a cigar between his teeth, slumped low in his seat smoking and reading a paper as calmly as though he were bent upon the most unimportant task in the world.

"How now?" I asked myself. "Here he is, and these country detectives and railroad men will be sure, on the instant, to make friends with him and do their best to serve him. They like that sort of man. They may even give him details which they will refuse to give me. I shall have to interview my man in front of him, and he will get the benefit of all my questions! At his request they may even refuse to let me interview him!"

I returned to my seat nervous and much troubled, all the more so because I now recalled Galvin's venomous threat. But I was determined to give him the tussle of his life. Now we would see whether he could beat me or not—not, if fair play were exer-

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cised; of that I felt confident. Why, he could not even write a decent line! Why should I be afraid of him?...Yet I was just the same.

As the dreary local drew nearer and nearer Pacific I became more and more nervous. For me the whole charm of this beautiful September landscape through which we were speeding was spoiled. As we neared Pacific I was almost in a panic, and as we drew up at the platform I jumped down, all alive with the determination not to be outdone. As I looked about me I saw Galvin leap out, and on the instant he spied me. I never saw a face change more quickly from an expression of ease and assurance to one of bristling opposition and distrust. How he hated me! He bristled like a savage dog and glared at me as he looked about to see who else might dismount; then seeing no one he bustled up to the station agent to see when the train from the west was due. I decided not to trail, and sought information from the conductor, who assured me that the eastbound express would probably be on time, five minutes later.

"It always stops here, does it?" I inquired anxiously.

"It always stops."

As we talked Galvin came back to the platform's edge and stood looking up the track. Our train now pulled out, and a few minutes later the whistle of the express was heard. Now for a real contest, I thought. Somewhere in one of those cars would be the bandit surrounded by detectives, and my duty was to get to him first, to explain who I was and begin my questioning, overawing Galvin perhaps with the ease with which I should take charge. Maybe the bandit would not want to talk; if so I must make him, cajole him or his captors, or both. Having done much of such I was not afraid, only I mistrusted Galvin and his influence. He might know the detectives. No doubt, since I was the better interviewer, or so I thought, I should have to do all the talking, and this wretch would make notes or make a deal with the detectives while I was talking. In a few moments the train was rolling into the station, and then I saw my friend Galvin leap aboard and, with that iron effrontery and savageness for which I always hated him, so animal-like was it, begin to race through the cars. I was about to follow him when I saw the conductor stepping down beside me.

"Is that train robber they are bringing in from Bald Knob on here? I'm from the 'Republic', and I've been sent out here to interview him."

"You're on the wrong road, brother," he smiled. "He's not on here. They're bringing him in over the Missouri Pacific. They took him across from Bald Knob to Denton and caught the train there—but I'll tell you", and he took out a large open-face silver watch and consulted it, "you might be able to catch that yet if you run for it. It's only across the field here. You see that little yellow station over there? Well, that's the Missouri Pacific depot. I don't know whether it stops here or not, but it may. It's due now, but sometimes it's a little late. You'll have to run for it though; you haven't a minute to spare."

"You wouldn't fool me about a thing like this, would you?" I pleaded.

"Not for anything. I know how you feel. If you can get on that train you'll find him, unless they've taken him off somewhere else."

I don't remember if I even stopped to thank him. Instead of following Galvin into the cars I now leaped to the little path which cut diagonally across this long field, evidently well

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worn by human feet. As I ran I looked back once or twice to see if my enemy was following me, but apparently he had not seen me. I now looked forward eagerly toward this other station, but, as I ran, I saw the semaphore arm, which stood at right angles opposite the station, lower for a clear track for some train. At the same time I spied a mail bag hanging out on an express arm, indicating that whatever this train was it was not going to stop here. I turned, still uncertain as to whether I had made a mistake in not searching the other train after all. Supposing that conductor had fooled me....Railroad men were sometimes purposely malicious, as I knew. Supposing the burglar were on there, and Galvin were already beginning to question him! Oh Lord, what a beat! And what would happen to me then? I slowed up in my running, chill beads of sweat bursting through my pores, but as I did so I saw the St. Louis and San Francisco train begin to move and from it, as if shot out of it, leap down the significant form of Galvin. "Ha!" I thought. "Then the robber is not on there! Galvin has just discovered it! He knows now that he is coming in on this line"—for I could see him running along the path. "Oh, kind heaven, if I can beat him to it! If I can only get on and leave him behind! He has all of a thousand feet still to run, and I am here!"

Desperately I ran into the station, a tiny thing, thrusting my eager head in at the open office window and calling to the short, stout, truculent little occupant of it:

"When is this St. Louis express due here?"

"Now," he replied surlily.

"Does it stop?"

"No, it don't stop."

"Can it be stopped?"

"It can *not!*"

"You mean that you have no right to stop it?"

"I mean I won't stop it!"

Even as he said this there came the ominous shriek of its whistle in the distance. "Oh Lord," I thought. "Here it comes, and he won't let me on, and Galvin will be here any minute!" For the moment I was even willing that Galvin should catch it too, if only I could get on. Think of what Wandell would think if I missed it!

"Will five dollars stop it?" I asked desperately, diving into my pocket.

"No."

"Will ten?"

"It might," he replied crustily.

"Stop it," I urged and handed over the bill.

The agent took it, grabbed a tablet of yellow order blanks which lay before him, scribbled something on the face of one and ran out to the track. At the same time he called to me:

"Run on down the track. Run after it. She won't stop here. She can't. Run on. She'll go a thousand feet before she can slow up."

Without further ado I began to run, while he stood there holding up this thin sheet of yellow paper. As I ran I heard the express rushing up behind me. On the instant it was alongside and past, its wheels grinding and emitting sparks. True enough, it was stopping! I should get on, and oh, glory be! Galvin would not! Fine! As I ran and thought, I could hear the final gritty screech of the wheels against the brakes as the train came to a full stop. Now I would make it, and what a victory! I came up to it and climbed aboard, but, looking back, I saw to my horror that my rival had almost caught up and was now close at hand, not a hundred feet behind.

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He had seen the signal, had seen me running, and instead of running to the station had taken a diagonal track and followed me. I saw that he would make the train almost as soon as I did. I tried to signal the agent behind to let the train go, but he had already signaled him. The conductor came out on the rear platform and I appealed to him.

"Let her go!" I pleaded. "Let her go! It's all right! Go on!"

"Don't that other fellow want to get on too?" he asked curiously.

"No, no, no! Don't let him on!" I pleaded. "I arranged to stop this train! I'm from the 'Republic'! He's nobody! He's no right on here!" But even as I spoke up came Galvin, breathless and perspiring, and crawled eagerly on, a leer of mingled triumph and joy at my discomfiture written all over his face. If I had had more courage I would have beaten him off. As it was, I merely groaned. To think that I should have done all this for him!

"Is that so?" he sneered. "Yuh think yuh'll leave me behind, do yuh? Well, I fooled yuh this trip, didn't I?" and his lip curled.

Plainly I was beaten. It was an immensely painful moment for me, to lose when I had everything in my own hands. My spirits fell so for the moment that I did not even trouble to inquire whether the robber was on the train. I ambled in after my rival, who had proceeded on his eager way, satisfied that I should have to beat him in the quality of the interview.

Alas, alas, for all my bright dreams!

O HAPPY HEART!

By John Hall Wheelock

BELOVED—O adorable and false,
Whom have you taken now in the dear toils!

By what pale margins do your footsteps stray,
Or what enchanted woods? What valleys hold
The lily of your loveliness? What hills
Have known your weight upon them, what far shores?

Twilight comes tenderly, while evening lifts
Along the pallid rim her lonely star—

O happy heart on which your heart is laid!

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THE LITERARY SPOTLIGHT

V: H. L. MENCKEN

With a Caricature by William Gropper

PICTURE a butcher's boy with apple cheeks, who parts his hair in the middle and laughs out of the side of his mouth, and you have a fair idea of the facial aspect of Heinie Mencken. He is forty-one, but there are moments when he looks fifteen. These moments are frequent when he is with George Jean Nathan. He never knows when Nathan is kidding him and, although he has been associated with Nathan for over twelve years, Nathan remains to him an enigma past resolving.

Nathan has been trying to get him to dress like an Algonquin ham ever since the day they met. At the present rate of progress he will have achieved success about the time Mencken becomes professor of English literature at Western Reserve University. Nathan got him to discard suspenders in favor of a belt and after years of persuasion prevailed upon him to carry a cane. Heinie backslid on the cane after tripping himself on the thing for weeks and catching it between his bowlegs every time he boarded a street car. During the interlude he used to carry the cane with an anguished air of affected jauntiness. In Baltimore he always left it at home until after nightfall, when he could practise carrying it without braving the guffaws of the yokelry.... And last August Nathan badgered him into buying a new hat in place of the battered relic he had been having annually renovated by a Greek bootblack. Nathan has yet to persuade him to turn over to the Salvation Army the faded cravenette which hangs from his champagne-bottle shoulders in folds like the skin on McAdoo's cheek.

It would be a mistake to assume from this that Mencken is a sloppy dresser. To the contrary, he is one of the best dressed men I have ever seen. He learned early that the secret of dressing well is to wear nothing which will attract attention either by its smartness or its shabbiness. In a word, to quote Stuart P. Sherman's memorable phrase, he has risen above his tailor. He would no more wear yellow gloves than he would wear a rubber collar. His clothes fit him; they are of excellent material; and they are always in subdued colors. When Belmont collars first came into style, he discovered that they effectively covered up his Adam's apple and felt all right on his neck, so he has worn them ever since. When he was in school, it was the style for youths to part their hair in the middle. He parted his hair thus, and, being a creature of habit, he never changed it.

A relentless opponent of Christianity, Mencken is the most Christian of men. A verbal flouter of the bourgeois virtues, he practises them all. He is thoroughly honest; he discharges his obligations promptly; he keeps his appointments; he is a man of his word; and he is a dutiful and affectionate son. I have never seen a man who is

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so ridden by relatives. He has scores of them, and to them all he is obliging and courteous. He is always doing something for them: assisting at weddings, arranging for proper hospital service, meeting them at trains, taking them for automobile rides, or minding their babies when they are off to the theatre. He lives with his mother and sister in the old family home in Baltimore and he is a model householder. He built a garden wall of which he is proud and boastful. He plants and weeds a garden and mows the lawn. He sees that the bin is full of coal and he can mend a leak in the plumbing.

He used to belong to a club in Baltimore which met every Saturday night in the back room of a repairer of musical instruments. The club had to be abandoned after Prohibition because two members died of the ill effects of near-beer. Expenses for floral horseshoes and Rocks of Ages exhausted the club funds. But during brighter days than these it was a happy gathering. For exactly one hour every Saturday night they made an awful din with two violins, a cello, piccolo, and bass tuba, with Mencken at the piano, pressing with might and main on the loud pedal and pounding like Percy Grainger. "Sweet noises", was Mencken's invariable comment after each debauch, "I'm as thirsty as a bishop." Then they would bundle away a few blocks to the top floor of a restaurant whereat a long table was ready with filled steins and a patent meat chopper. Mention of that meat chopper is important, for it was the instrument used in preparing the weirdest victual ever devised by the human mind. Into it went raw meat, onions, and other ingredients which no stomach not made of cast iron could hold longer than five seconds. Just as a guest of the evening would get the first mouthful down, Mencken would lean over and impart this jolly little bit of information: "That fellow there at the meat chopper is a surgeon at Johns Hopkins. He discovered that the rump and loin of unembalmed cadavers is both highly nutritious and palatable. He has been able to obtain some choice cuts without expense to the club, through his hospital connections."...I succeeded in forking three helpings into my vest and two into my hat without being detected and earned thereby hearty commendation as a gentleman and an epicure. It wasn't for long. It was, by mistake, Mencken's hat.

He is an inveterate practical joker, and in this he is not always the soul of honor that he might be. He and Nathan once engaged to write some sweet and bitter facts about each other to be printed in a pamphlet. Mencken got Nathan pickled and wrote both of them, handing himself all the berries in the world and libeling Nathan scurrilously. He has stolen, to date, fifty-eight Gideon Bibles, twenty-seven from the Hotel Astor alone, and presented them to friends. He collects religious leaflets and tracts, especially those announcing the second coming of the Lord, and passes them on to his correspondents, urging them to repent of their sins.

He has his house cluttered up with prints of funny looking fellows he calls his ancestors. He bought the lot of them at curio shops in Germany.

The erroneous notion sometimes obtains that Mencken is a Jew. His physiognomy belies it. He has the blond, broad features of a typical Saxon. One trait, though, suggests that some remote ancestor was Semitic: he washes his hands fifteen or twenty times a day. That is a Jewish trait which probably had its origin in

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Sketched by William Gropper

H. L. Mencken

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the days when—but it is best not to go into that here.

The healthiest individual you could possibly imagine, he is always complaining of ills in such a manner that you would think he was dying. Probably this comes from reading too much medical literature. His technical knowledge of anatomy and therapy is amazingly large; probably no man living has a vaster vocabulary of medical jargon. He reads all the medical journals, quack and legitimate, from table of contents to lost-vigor ads. As a residuum of so much reading, he has come to believe that all doctors are quacks. Still, he has tried sixty-seven "cures" for hay fever and confidently announces every spring that he is rid of it. Just as regularly he begins to sneeze about the middle of July. He satirizes prophylaxis in an amusing play but he is a bug on bacteria. He is tidy and clean. When he has a stag party at his house, he sends his mother and sister away. After the fellows have gone, he sweeps the floors, dusts the furniture, washes and dries the dishes, puts everything in place, and leaves the rooms orderly and immaculate.

Once he engaged in a book-length debate, in the form of letters, with Robert Rives La Monte on the subject "Men vs. the Man". Mencken argued fiercely for individualism, *les droits de seigneur*, aristocracy, and the right of the few to exploit the weak. La Monte argued with equal heat for the rights of the proletariat, the need for socialism, and the blessings of altruism and the equal chance. The joke of it is that Mencken at the time was sweating away in his shirt sleeves at a newspaper job while La Monte was taking his ease on a beautiful country estate in Connecticut.

All this only goes to show that the Freudians are right and that all literary expression is merely a projection of subconscious wishes. For all that Mencken disparages American civilization, he would be profoundly uncomfortable if the sort of society he presents as desirable should happen to exist. Burton Rascoe is right when he says that Mencken in any other country would be unthinkable and is right again when he says that Mencken is America's most ardent patriot. Nine-tenths of his life is given over to denunciation, and were there nothing to denounce he would be profoundly unhappy. As it is he is as happy as Pollyanna. No one gets more fun out of living. Indeed, such a jolly time does he have dancing about "with arms and legs", goosing solemn and serious people and playing ribald jokes, that for six years he has been repeating himself, progressing far too little, developing almost not at all. For two years he has not bothered to vary his startling vocabulary and it is becoming a little stale. This is, perhaps, the penalty of getting a reputation based upon a manner. An audience is created by it and an audience demands repetition. It is hard to imagine cynical Ecclesiastes writing the Psalms of David or Jeremiah singing another Song of Songs.

But whatever Mencken's destiny or place may become in American literature he will always remain, you may be sure, a warmly human figure. All women, without exception, like him. And all men do too, who have ever met him—scholars, pedants, boozers, preachers, teamsters, politicians, highbrows, lowbrows, and medium brows. That is a test and an achievement. The secret of this is that he is frank and unaffected, courteous, gentle, amiable, wise, jovial, and a gentleman.

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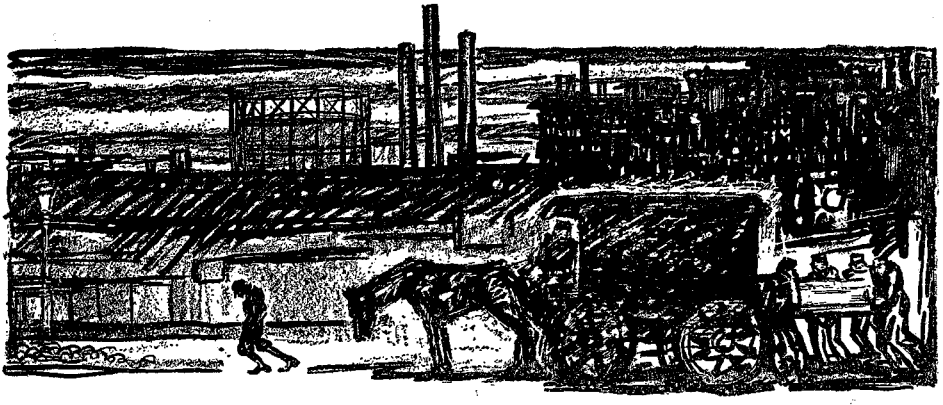

"Mrs. Spolatro saw someone being carried out on a stretcher"

ANTIQUES

By Gene Markey

With Sketches by Richard Lahey

OLD Kisch had been brooding over it all day. Since morning his imagination had been conjuring up an endless procession of torturing thoughts that trooped across his mind and burned—like little twisted flames. Several times he had tried to tell himself that it was all foolishness, yet the shadow had never once lifted—not even while customers were in the shop.

One or two of these, who came regularly to buy antiques, had remarked the change in his manner—the morose preoccupation. When they had asked him the prices of things he had jerked out of his abstraction with a curious, startled look...almost as if he had seen something that frightened him. Yet as he stared into the gloom of the shop it was but his own thoughts he saw—taking form in the dim corners, and lurking among the dusty heaps of antique chairs and tables and cabinets....

He had been half afraid to leave this afternoon—even long enough to drive over to Pushkin's junk shop on Halsted Street, to call for a battered melodeon that he had purchased for ten dollars and would transform into a two hundred dollar escritoire. All the way back, as he sat humped over on the driver's seat, clucking to Rosczika, the fat horse, while the wagon rattled over the cobbles, his mind had been full of the thing he had seen that morning. Ordinarily he would have been merry over the magnificent bargain he had found in the melodeon, but today the shroud of smoky sky flung over Chicago was no greyer than his thoughts, and he drove homeward up Clark Street so immersed in his own broodings that the wagon was

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saved from collisions at three different corners only by the prescience of Rosczika.

And all this because of Momma—and young Stein.

Old Kisch was sixty-one. Momma was thirty-four. And young Stein, who, two weeks before, had come to work in the shop as a cabinet maker, was twenty-eight. Old Kisch worshiped Momma above everything else in the world—even Maxie, their son, who was fourteen. He believed in God, of course, but professed no religion other than a devout adoration of his young wife. And he had never felt the difference in their ages until this morning, when he had come suddenly to the door of the work room, where furniture was mended—to see Momma and young Stein standing together in a bright pattern of sunshine, laughing over some joke as merrily as two children. As he stood there, in the gloom of the doorway, watching the sunlight play about them, he felt suddenly old. It was as if he were standing in the back of a darkened theatre, gazing at a lighted stage, whereon was being enacted a play of youth. There was Momma, young and buxom and full of life....And Adolph Stein. How much alike they were, those two, with their yellow hair and their laughing blue eyes. And what a priceless gift of the gods they shared —youth.

For the first time in their fifteen years of married life old Kisch felt that he was cruelly out of things, and a sudden shaft of torturing light struck across his brain. What if—

All day his thoughts had swirled and eddied about that sharp, dreadful, "What if"—until it seemed that he would go mad. It wasn't that he did not trust Momma. She had been a devoted mother to little Maxie; she had made him a good wife, and he had always felt that she loved him. Something within him tried to whisper that it was only natural for Momma to want, occasionally, to talk and laugh with someone her own age. Yet the doubts and misgivings that simmered in the back of his head would not be denied, and the word that echoed and re-echoed through his thoughts—hollowly, like the tolling of a bell—was *youth...youth....*

Rosczika drew up to the curb and of her own accord halted before a dingy, brick building, whose crestfallen facade seemed to diffuse an aura of self-apology. The old man sat for a moment, staring into space, then looked up dully. Over the door hung his own sign:

MAX KISCH
ANTIQUES

He was home. Slowly, with the stiffness of old age, he clambered down, over the wheel, to the walk, and tied the horse. In the doorway he paused, and a sudden fear smote his heart. What if—

As he climbed the stairs there came no footsteps from above hurrying to meet him as usual, no cheery voice to greet him. In the gloomy upper hallway he groped for a match to light the gas, and there came a sudden discordant yapping from Momma's two little poodles. They seemed to be shut in somewhere. Half frightened the old man stopped to listen. What if—

Then he heard a laugh from the direction of the work room, and the sound of Momma's voice—and young Stein's....

A grim November dusk was creeping in from the outer world, and among the piles of old furniture shadows deepened. Before the open door

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of the coal stove stood old Kisch, holding his hands close to the glowing square of red heat, and twisting them round and round as if washing them....

hands before the stove stopped turning....He was an antique himself!

Then footsteps shuffled along the hallway outside, and came the sound of voices. Old Kisch shook himself

"Rosczika drew up to the curb and halted"

An ornate Victorian thermometer, hanging by the door, showed the temperature of the room to be stifling, yet he was cold. His head ached dully, and there was a vague pain in his side....

Through the grey windows, darkly curtained, came the rumble and clatter of Clark Street. A tall grandfather clock, leaning wearily against the wall, gossiped of the passing minutes. It would soon be five-thirty.

The shop seemed full of ghosts tonight....Each table and mirror and bedstead was a sad ghost of the past. Antiques...he had spent his life among them. After all, what right had he to a young wife? He was an antique himself. The thought smote him sharply, and for an instant his

and listened, and peered through the partly open door. The cabinet maker was leaving, and Momma was bending over the banister, waving down at him.

"Well, good night, Adolph," she was saying, "see you tomorrow."

Was there a note of tenderness in young Stein's answering good night, or did old Kisch imagine it? A few seconds later the street door below banged shut. The cabinet maker was gone.

Old Kisch rubbed his hands together. With the banging of that door a great load seemed lifted from his mind. What a foolishness—to be jealous, at his age....When Momma had been such a good wife to him for fifteen years! It was all nonsense.

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Why shouldn't she enjoy seeing a young fellow about the place, and having a joke with him? Surely there was no harm in laughing. It had been wrong of him to entertain for a minute those doubts. He could see it all now....

Even the dull pain in his side was forgotten as he emerged from the

"What a foolishness—to be jealous, at his age"

shadows of the front room and stepped into the hallway.

"Momma!"

"Oh—you scared me! Where you been, Papa? Not in the shop all afternoon."

"I was out."

In the flickering light from the gas jet they presented an odd contrast: the gentle old man, with his thatch of mouse-colored hair, his pale face, his spectacles and brushy mustache... the robust young woman, with her fair hair, her calm blue eyes, and her full red lips.

"Momma," shyly he reached out his hand to her, "Momma, you—you still—" He stopped and patted her arm clumsily, and tried to smile.

"Say—what's the matter with you? You don't look yourself. Ain't you feeling well, Papa?"

"Sure, oh, sure—I feel all right. Only I—oh, I feel all right...."

Supper that night was like any other supper in the Kisch home. And yet it was not exactly the same, either. The florid wall paper and the red table cloth were no different, surely, nor the plates of food. Young Maxie, who resembled his mother, was in his accustomed place, talking in his slangy way about the guys in his school and the football team and all. Sometimes Maxie's breezy Americanism rather bewildered old Kisch, but tonight he scarcely heard the boy's chatter.

For tonight old Kisch's mind was entirely occupied with Momma. He sat watching her as she ate, and when she left the room to carry out dishes or to bring in the coffee, his eyes followed her, and there was something rather wistful and pathetic in his glances.

Momma did not seem quite herself somehow. She was more silent than usual. Or did he merely imagine it? This uncomfortable pain in his side, perhaps, was responsible for everything....

It was long after midnight when the gong of an ambulance sounded in the quiet street, and fat Mrs. Spolatro, who kept the fruit store next to old Kisch's shop, put her head out of her upstairs window and looking down saw someone being carried out on a stretcher.

Her first thoughts being of Black Hand and murder, Mrs. Spolatro set up a loud wail and shouted down to ask who had been killed. Whereupon

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a sleepy interne growled that nobody had—yet; that it was a case of appendicitis.

As old Kisch groped his way through a topsyturvy world back to consciousness, he was aware of three things: a great pain somewhere between his chest and his knees, a burning thirst—and Momma, standing in the doorway. And in his delirium the old man stretched out his arms and cried piteously for her, and Momma came and sat by his bed all day, while he clung tightly to her hand, and moaned and wept by turns.

On the second day, when he was feeling easier, Momma came again, and sat by his bed, and occasionally gave him little pieces of ice with which he might cool his hot mouth, but which he was not under any circumstances to swallow. And on the third day she came again.

And her kindness to him, and the sight of her calm blue eyes, cheered old Kisch's soul and swept away all his doubts, and made him feel that he had come through Purgatory to Heaven. It was so good to have Momma beside him...it was like the old days—like the time he had had tonsilitis, the first year they were married. And old Kisch was very happy, in spite of his illness, and never once so much as mentioned the name of Adolph Stein, the cabinet maker.

Then, on the fourth day, Momma did not come to the hospital.

"H'lo, Papa!"

"It's Maxie! Hello, Maxie."

"How you feel t'night, anyway?"

"Oh—perhaps a little better, maybe."

As the fair-haired boy sprawled clumsily into a chair, Miss Kelly the nurse asked if there were anything her patient wanted, then went out closing the door after her.

They were alone—the father and the son—and a strained little silence fell over them. Maxie's clear blue eyes glanced abstractedly around the white room, and he crossed his knees several times and talked idly of "the team" and of their "big game" on Saturday....And then another awkward silence fell.

Old Kisch's face on the pillow was grey and drawn, and there was a look of dull suffering in his eyes.

"Maxie," he said huskily, "for why don't Momma come to the hospiddle here to see me? Three days, now, and she ain't—"

"But Papa—" Maxie sat up suddenly and looked at his father as if he feared the old man were not in his right mind, "Momma *does* come t'see you. Every night she comes to the hospital—why, she don't get home till after midnight!"

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BUT HOW ABOUT THE POSTMAN?

By Ruth Hale

IT is only fair to forgive St. John Ervine* for making so many bad arguments against the married woman who sticks to her own name—popularly called "maiden"—because the good arguments are so few. But he does seem to have collected a mighty lot of assailable stuff. His trouble is that he has considered the matter from everybody's point of view except that of the woman he writes about, whose wants in the matter he has not even dimly guessed.

"As a matter of social convenience", says he, "everything can be said for the custom of husband and wife sharing the same name—whether that name be the husband's or the wife's is immaterial—and there is nothing to be said for the proposal that each should retain the pre-marriage name." Well, let Mr. Ervine ask the first ten men he meets—or the first thousand—how immaterial they would think it to take their wives' names when they married. What proportion does he think would jump at the chance? Let him suggest to them seriously that they give their names up, for the convenience of the butler, the postman, the grocer, or a neighbor, and I think not one of them would be able to make a coherent sound in reply.

The long and short of it is that man, in the day of his ascendency—his economic ascendency—got the notion that he owned whatever he could pay for. English Common Law fell in with him. "A man and his wife are one, and the man is the one," it said. Well, obviously, this was not true. No two people become one, not even Siamese twins. It was a fine old phrase, particularly for the "one", and it sanctioned a lot of mischief. But most of the disabilities of marriage—which even Mr. Ervine concedes us—have grown up in trying to make that silly thing become true.

Wives have done many things, in their cipher estate, to try to even matters up. The fact did not escape them that though man was the "one", he was not the one who could make them three. There were other discrepancies that fell under their notice. These led to action. Many wives were willing to live as ciphers, for the sake of their comfort. Probably they shared Mr. Ervine's horror of that hostile hotel clerk, whose mind was set for one, and who could not bear to see double. Other wives, less "sensibly minded", developed a certain shrewishness not provided for by the Common Law.

Still others turned in upon the great sources of their sex power, quite overlooked by the Common Law but cannily upkept by nature, who knew what sex was what before there was a law, and by such powers these wisest of wives made their men behave at home, however much they strutted abroad.

It is pretty well within the lifetime of Mr. Ervine, and of my own, that still another group of wives have decided to attack their difficulties a little more radically. Since the "oneness"

**Taking Your Husband's Name in Vain* (December BOOKMAN).

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in itself, irrespective of who must be the "one", was a palpable fraud, why not just throw it into some ashcan and go back rationally to being two? There is no finer symbol of that determination than two names. Mr. Ervine and the butlers may protest, the one with a gay gesture and the other with a correct one, but no woman bent on emergence is going to be red-herringed off by an emergency.

Mr. Ervine protests that it is really too confusing to be at a party and have no guarantee that the lady he is about to address on the subject of a delinquent gentleman is not actually the wife of that very culprit. We sympathize with him for a moment, and then step over into the feelings of the lady, and make another inspection. If she has assumed the name of her husband she knows full well that Mr. Ervine is going to address her with every possible prudence. Just the kind of thing she has heard since the day she married. It can't be so interesting, any more. But at her expense Mr. Ervine will have protected himself—that is, in a way. When he says: "Who is that ratty little man over there?" to the lady who has her own name, she may abash him by saying, "My husband." But when he says, "Who is that wretched person by the mantel?" to the lady bearing her husband's name, she may answer, "That's my brother."

Or he may say: "Dull person, Smithers, isn't he?" to some safe male fellow guest, and have the pained reply: "But he is really my closest friend...."

There is a lot of rubbish talked about this "confusion". That is because confusion is not the real objection to women's having their names. A married woman who claims her name is issuing a challenge, and the challenge is taken up. It is a defiance, and as such is dealt with by society, under a hundred euphemisms, always with hostility. What defiance of any ancient and respectable routine was ever received any differently? Whoever expected to defy the Elder Statesmen and go free? By some curious oversight, the law, whether Common or preferred, left woman the full free right to her own name, whether she married or not. Custom took it from her. Custom said, too, that man owned what he paid for, and could put his name on everything for which he provided money. He wrote his name more often than a little boy with chalk signs his to a fence. He put it on his land, his house, his wife and children, his slaves when he had them, and on everything that was his. He liked it, he liked it a lot. He won't give it up without a struggle, and why should he? But he is already civilized enough to disguise his reasons, and the time may come when he will be willing to let us have our names, symbols of our separate selves, partners with him in equal dignity, and sharing what we jointly choose to share, without that outside pressure which has been, for so long, so disastrous and so ill-advised.

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THE LONDONER

The London Book Trade—A Slump in Cheap Editions—Some Good Books Coming—"Martin Pippin"—A New Strachey—Bertrand Russell on China—Walpole's Society of Bookmen—His Debates with Drinkwater—A Rival Strachey in the Field—The Sitwells and Their Squibs—Marcel Proust—Martinez Sierra—The Life of Dostoevsky—"Tell Wells"—The Vailima Stevenson at a Premium.

LONDON, *December* 1, 1921.

A BOOKSELLER to whom I was speaking the other day told me that the book trade has not yet begun to move for Christmas. Business, he said, had been so bad during the greater part of the year that trade would have to take a very sudden turn for the better before Christmas if the deficit were to be made good. The same may be said of the majority of publishers, for except those who have a large "catalogue" (that is to say, a large number of older books which sell in season and out of it, year in and year out) the London publishers have been doing badly. Trade has been slack and expenses high. Some of the costs, such as paper, are materially reduced; but so far there has been little sign of lower charges for printing and binding. The younger firms, who are still dependent upon the running success of their season's books, have been struggling hard to avert absolute disaster. I do not want to take a pessimistic view, but I cannot say that the outlook fills me with rosy hopes. On the contrary.

Another thing which disquiets me is that there has been a big slump in the cheap edition. The price of the cheap book stole up very steadily during the war and the increase of costs, and the books continued to sell as though nothing had happened. But this is no longer the case. I hear that one very large firm has actually gone to the length of refusing to buy any more of these cheap books until its present stock is exhausted. The accumulation has been so great that this is the only means by which the money expended upon this particular line of books can be realized.

* * * *

Meanwhile it is good to know, as I do from various sources, that one cause of shyness in the buyers of books is to be removed. That is to say, we are going to have some good books next spring. The past season has not wholly lacked good books, but the proportion has been small to the total bulk. However, I hear that there are to be several very remarkable publications in the spring, and this will be all to the good. If people get into the habit of going into booksellers' shops to buy good books perhaps they will continue to buy the others—not so good. It is to be hoped so.

The latest good book that I have read is one which I fear may be passed over by a good many people, partly for the reason that it has been given one of the most inappropriate dust-covers that I have ever seen. The book is a fanciful collection of tales for the sensitive grown up, and it has been given

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a cover which makes it look like a book for insensitive children. The size of the book aids that impression, and when parents pick the book up to see if it will do for little Sammy or little Selina they will be outraged by the absence of other illustrations, and will throw it down again without learning quite anything at all about a very charming work. It is called "Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard", and is by Eleanor Farjeon. Miss Farjeon is the daughter of a novelist whose work was familiar to an older generation, and is the sister, I am told, of Herbert Farjeon, whose dramatic notes in one of the Sunday newspapers are so superior to the run of such things, and so outspoken, that they have attracted a good deal of attention. Miss Farjeon is devoted to Sussex, and in her pages, as in those of Hilaire Belloc, the lovely names of Sussex villages come entrancingly as a part of the music of the whole. Her chief delight is to walk (perhaps I should say "tramp") about Sussex with a knapsack over her shoulder. When I mentioned this fact to a friend of mine he said, "That's bad", and indeed it may suggest one of those enormities, a sturdy woman with brogued shoes and jumper and bobbed hair and a stick and a horribly aggressive masculinity. But this, I am assured, would do Miss Farjeon a grave injustice. Having read "Martin Pippin" I am in no mood to think ill of Miss Farjeon even for a sturdy habit. If she write such books until I die I will give her leave to tramp Sussex in whatever costume she pleases.

The book is described by the publishers as a "phantasy", which I do not think it is. It is extremely fanciful, and full of delicate charm. It is the story of a whimsical creature who tries to help a witless plowman in his courtship, and the book is made up of the stories he tells to the six milkmaids who are supposed to be guarding the lovesick maiden. They are all sworn manhaters. They are most severe young persons. They look askance upon any reference to kisses or marriages. But Martin is so plausible that he melts all their hearts, and wins himself a bride. And as he melts all our hearts in melting theirs, I feel sure that he is a most valuable addition to modern literature. He is a troubadour. And Miss Farjeon does not labor anything. Quite a little of our delight in her book is due to the fact that we guess, as children guess, at the meanings of innumerable sly hints in the stories and the connecting conversations between the narrator and the guarding milkmaids.

* * * *

A new volume of essays by Lytton Strachey will be published early in the new year. To a large extent it will be made up of contributions by the author to the press during the last few years, and the subjects cover a wide range. It will be good news for those who rightly rate Mr. Strachey's book of French Literature very highly that many of the essays deal with French subjects. I think there can be no question that the author of "Eminent Victorians" learned much from his study of Voltaire and writers even more modern. He is, in fact, one of the present-day writers of English who have derived something, at any rate, of their style and manner of approaching a subject from the French. Strachey lives rather remote from the hurlyburly, at Pangbourne-on-Thames, a charming riverside resort some distance beyond Reading, too far from London to be beset by the most vulgar sort of tripper. I hear that his perfectly normal manner when he visits

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the butcher's has given rise to the impression in the district that he is a very eccentric gentleman. The impression is probably heightened by the fact that he has a characteristic voice, and a manner so grave as to lead the unsophisticated to believe every word he says. With most men this would be an erroneous assumption: with Strachey it is grotesque.

* * * *

Another man with a characteristic voice is Bertrand Russell, who also has associations with Cambridge (where Strachey has left an unforgetable tradition). It will be remembered that Russell was reported to have died earlier in the year during his stay in China. He is far from dead. He begins in a few weeks' time a series of articles on China, just announced by "The Nation". They should be highly interesting, for Russell believes that in China he has found the ideal place of residence. (Needless to say he is now actually living in London, and intends to go on living here.) It must be an eminently philosophical country. Conversation there is uninterrupted by the claims of business. Abstract speculation is a universal habit. Ingenuity in thought and its expression has become an art. Is it any wonder that a philosopher should prefer China to all countries that he has visited?

* * * *

I mentioned a few months ago that Hugh Walpole had a little society of his own, the object of which was the bringing together of writers and publishers and booksellers. This society has now become a rather larger affair, with a name and a meeting place, and a committee, and all the rest of the paraphernalia required by a real society. It should do good in making the various branches of the book trade and the trade of authorship understand each other better than they do at present. Upon the first committee are two authors (Walpole and J. D. Beresford), two publishers (Sydney Pawling of Heinemann's and Mr. Marston of Leonard Parsons, Ltd.), a journalist, a librarian, and two booksellers. A literary agent has been co-opted, and there are to be others as soon as the need for them is manifest. The club is to be limited in membership for the present, but no doubt it will grow as soon as its objects are digested and appreciated. They are, somewhat vaguely at present, to advance the cause of good literature and the friendly understanding between publishers and booksellers. Other ambitious schemes are to be brought forward later on. The club, to be known as "The Society of Bookmen", had its first meeting last week at the Cock Tavern, Fleet Street, and from what I saw of the members then its meetings will never lack interest. The gathering was varied. Several of its members spoke Scottish, and one seemed to hear more of these than of the Sassenachs. I heard one publisher animatedly arguing with a librarian, and heard a bookseller who unexpectedly found himself among three publishers mutter to himself that he was a pigeon among the hawks. The authors were select, and "kept theirselves *to* theirselves". It was a small group, since neither Galsworthy nor Walpole found it possible to attend, and consisted, as far as I could see, of W. B. Maxwell, St. John Ervine, and John Drinkwater. Both J. C. Squire and Robert Lynd are members of the society, but they were both away, and so will have to make acquaintance with their fellow members on some later occasion.

Walpole, by the way, has been publicly debating with John Drinkwater

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at Cambridge upon the relative merits of the novel and the play as vehicles for the expression of current thought. The novel won, upon this occasion, but whether this was because of the eloquence of Walpole or the intrinsic merits of his case I am not able to say. The result was remarkable, for the two opponents in the debate motored back to London, safely driven by Drinkwater, and Walpole took to his bed. But the illness which landed him there had nothing whatever to do with the strenuousness of the debate, for it was merely a very bad chill, from which the patient is recovering steadily, aided no doubt by the excellent reports which he must be receiving from his publishers of the success of "The Young Enchanted".

* * * *

When I spoke just now of the new book by Lytton Strachey I ought to have added that his uncle, St. Loe Strachey, the editor of "The Spectator", is determined not to let Lytton have it all his own way in the matter of authorship. St. Loe Strachey is writing his reminiscences. He has lived in the midst of politics and current ideas for a good many years now, and he must have passed through a great number of the crises which periodically beset our island home. I have never thought of St. Loe Strachey as a writer, and in fact I should think he was not much of a writer; but he is an exceedingly able journalist, and his knowledge of many things relating to the life of the Tory party must be unsurpassed. So while I imagine that Lytton Strachey may rest quiet in his bed regarding the laureateship of the Stracheys, the reminiscences of his uncle will have a justification not always present when volumes of memoirs are freely undertaken.

In addition to a new volume of "Wheels" which is nearly ready, the Sitwells are bringing out a pamphlet called "Who Killed Cock Robin?" I presume that this is a pamphlet in reply to criticisms of the Sitwellian saga. Whatever one thinks of their poetry, one cannot deny to the Sitwells an inexhaustible fund of energy when it comes to the lampooning of their friends and rivals. If they were nothing but writers of lampoons I suppose there would be little to be said for them; but the truth is that here and there among the innumerable lines which emanate from Chelsea there are some (quite a number) which have a curious distinction and a rare kind of beauty. The "infant Sitwells baying at the moon" of a familiar satiric piece are not always so baying. They are making a bid for the bays. And if some of the performances of this lively young family are at times insufferable, at least it must be said for them that more perhaps than any other writers at this time they are perceptibly children of their age. It should not be forgotten when the sins of the family are being arraigned. I must admit, however, that the sins are rather emphasized at times. They will no doubt be more than ever emphasized in the coming volume of "Wheels", which contains a long satiric poem, the significance of which cannot be concealed, called "The Death of Mercury".

* * * *

For some time there have been notable allusions in the press to which our most distinguished critics contribute, to the great value of the novels of Marcel Proust. These were described to me the other day by an eminent person as resembling "Sinister Street" distended to ten times its natural length and with ten times its closeness

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of detail. I think the description somewhat exaggerated. There is no doubt that Proust's work, intricate and detailed though it is, is something quite exceptionally distinguished; and for this reason it should be known to all who care for the original and the deliberately artistic. The French offers difficulties, not only on account of the language employed, but also because all except very "naturalized" readers of French tend to tire of long works in a tongue only half familiar. It is therefore with pleasure that I hear of an approaching translation into English of one of the Proust novels, to be followed, if circumstances warrant, by its successors. The book, I need scarcely say to those who are acquainted with the author, is "Du Côté de Chez Swann". The translator is C. K. Scott-Moncrieff, whose translation of "The Song of Roland", issued last year by Chapman and Hall, has been so greatly praised.

* * * *

I suppose that the success of Blasco Ibáñez in both America and England, and also the lesser success of some others of his compatriots, will make Spanish authors quite the correct thing for the future. I suggested some time ago that we were on the verge of a great Spanish boom, and although my forecast has not yet been fulfilled in perfect detail, matters have gone far enough for me to refer to this prognostication without embarrassment. At any rate, if there is a chance of reading or seeing the plays of another Spaniard, Martinez Sierra, I hope nobody who values charm and delicacy in literature will miss the opportunity. I have been reading some translations in American periodicals by John Garrett Underhill, and the plays are really noteworthy. I saw one of them, translated by Helen and Harley Granville Barker, some months ago, under the title of "The Romantic Young Lady", and this was perfect in its slight way. My researches have not as yet gone very far into the work of Martinez Sierra, although I perhaps ought not to admit in print an ignorance of the Spanish language; but they are sufficient to confirm my high impression of his talent; and it is to the enterprise of an American firm that I understand we are to have a fairly complete, or at least, representative collection of his dramatic works in able translation. To give a representation of his work as a whole we should need many volumes, and translators occupied from morning to night for many months. If Spain does more for authors in one way than another, it is in making them prolific. The classic example is Lope de Vega. The modern one must be Martinez Sierra.

* * * *

Heinemann has at last published the life of Dostoevsky by his daughter which I announced many months ago. Written first of all in French, I gather, and later published for the first time in Switzerland in the German tongue, the book is allowed to retain in its English version, especially in its index, some indications of its continental origin. That is to say, the accepted modern English rendering of Russian proper names has been royally disregarded. Mrs. Garnett, whose translations of Dostoevsky Heinemann publishes, will probably be moved to pain by some of these departures. The first of them occurs upon the title page of the book, where Dostoevsky's name is spelled differently from the way in which the acknowledged translation of his novels gives it. The index gives many other varieties of vagary in spelling, and it should, I think, have been carefully revised before publica-

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tion. Further, when one contemplates a set of an author's works, and finds the name spelled there otherwise, the effect is disquieting. Whatever may be said of Mrs. Garnett's transliteration of Russian names, at least it is consistent, and gives a standard which the publisher might be expected to follow. The book itself is of abounding interest, and should be read by every man who has read the novels of Dostoevsky. It is a real document of classic importance.

* * * *

"Tell Wells" has become the new formula in London. It will go down to posterity as a locution. The merits and demerits of the controversy over the letters which Wells has been sending to the New York "World", and which the "World" has been sending to the "Daily Mail", do not particularly interest me, except in so far as it seems to be the duty of a reputable paper to publish the work of a distinguished publicist (under his own name) as it is received. The "Mail" has taken care all along to state that Wells gives his own opinions only—a fact to which readers of the "Mail" need hardly have had their attention drawn at all—and as the articles are appearing in America it seems very ostrich-like of the "Mail" to try and suppress the opinions here. In any case, the row has been a splendid advertisement for Wells's book when it appears. There, no doubt, the expurgated opinions upon France will make their appearance in full, and we shall be able to see exactly what it is that the "Mail" objects to our reading. I do not know as I write whether the matter will be allowed by the "Mail" to appear in some other and less squeamish organ, but any paper getting hold of the remaining articles, in place of the "Mail", would get a big help in the matter of sale, for the matter has been very widely spoken of, and I think (though I am not sure) that the general sympathy is with Wells in the silly dispute. This is so even among those to whom I have spoken who are extremely French in their sympathies. Suppression is really contrary (and not only hypocritically so) to English notions of fair play.

* * * *

I hear that the new Vailima edition of Stevenson, published here at £40 a set, is already, before a volume has been published, at a £10 premium. This sounds as though there were plenty of money about, and in fact I believe the edition could probably have been sold to the booksellers twice over. Whether the great demand is due to a rush to buy and hold the books against a certain rise in price it is too early as yet to tell, but Stevenson is still a great name with the booksellers, and the first edition of the Davos Press "Works", published under the title of "Moral Emblems, and Other Poems", is already all sold. I do not wonder at this, for it is a charming little book, and one to which only subscribers to the various collected editions had hitherto had access. Needless to say, the poems and the woodcuts in the book are a delight not only to the Stevensonian but to all who can appreciate such things.

SIMON PURE

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THE POEMS OF THE MONTH

Selected by Herbert S. Gorman

I AM tempted to be dogmatic and assert that the best poetry is to be found in the pages of "The New Republic", but perhaps the month of November was an extremely lucky one for that periodical in point of contributions. Anyway, such efforts as "A Song of War-Chariots", a translation from Tu Fu by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu, "Castilian" and "Three Wishes" by Elinor Wylie, "The Humming Bird" by Padraic Colum, and "April Mortality" by Leonie Adams, according to my predilection all contain varying degrees of excellence that lift them from the usual run of magazine poetry. I am rather put to it to select from this group; but after reading them several times I should choose the Tu Fu translation, Mrs. Wylie's "Three Wishes", and Mr. Colum's "The Humming Bird".

Three more poems complete my selections. "In a Far Land" by Padraic Colum, from "The Dial", possesses that quiet earthy charm that impregnates so much of the work of this Irish poet. Joseph Auslander's "Last Song", in "The Measure", is imbued with a delicate wistfulness, and Genevieve Taggard's "For a Shy Lover", in "The Nation", has a rippling lyric quality that makes it a delight to read. Several other poems (alas, not to be quoted) seemed to me charming, among them being "A Yoke of Steers" by Du Bose Heyward in "The Atlantic Monthly", and the rather violent yet barbaric "Oriental Nocturne" by Charles Ashleigh in "The Century".

A SONG OF WAR-CHARIOTS

The war-chariots rattle,
The war-horses whinny;
To each man a bow and a quiver at his belt...
Father, mother, son, wife, stare at them going,
Till dust shall have buried the bridge at Hsien-yang.
We trot with them and cry and catch at their long sleeves,
But the sound of our crying goes up to the clouds;
For every time a bystander asks the men a question,
The men can only answer us that they have to go....
Some of them, at fifteen sent north to guard the river,
At forty were sent west to cultivate the border.
The mayor wound their turbans for them when they started out
And still they're at the front, though their turbaned hair is white,
At the front where the blood of men spills like the sea—
And still the heart of Emperor Wu is lifted up for war.
Do you know that, east of the mountain, in two hundred districts
And in thousands of villages, only weeds grow
And, though strong women plough, the rows are all broken?...
Soldiers of Ch'in can face arduous battle,
But their officers drive them like chickens and dogs.

. . . . . .

We have learned now that having a boy is bad luck—
And having a girl is very much better,
Who marries and lives in the house of a neighbor,
While under the sod we bury our boys....
Go to the Blue Sea, look along the shore
At all the old white bones forsaken—
New ghosts wail there, together with the old,
Loudest in the dark sky of a stormy day.

Tu Fu. Translated by Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-hu
—*The New Republic*

THREE WISHES

Sink out of being, and go down, go down
Through the steep layers of emerald and jade
With warm thin skin of turquoise overlaid,

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Where the slow coral spins a ghostly town
Of tower and minaret and fretted crown,
Give up your breath in sleep's subaqueous shade,
Hold to oblivion; are you afraid
Of cold deep death? Are you afraid to drown?

You have three flashing looks, like fairy wishes;
One burns your eyelids with a lightning-wink
Which turns into a rainbow world, and one
Shows sea-birds brighter than the silver fishes,
And one—the last wild chance before you sink—
A flock of dancing clouds about the sun.

Elinor Wylie
—*The New Republic*

THE HUMMING BIRD

Up from the navel of the world,
Where Cuzco has her founts of fire,
The passer of the Gulf he comes.

He lives in air, a bird of fire,
Charted by flowers still he comes
Through spaces that are half the world.

With glows of suns and seas he comes;
A life within our shadowed world
That's bloom, and gem, and kiss of fire!

Padraic Colum
—*The New Republic*

IN A FAR LAND

I

The crows still fly to that wood, and out of that wood she comes,
Carrying her load of sticks, a little less now than before,
Her strength being less; she bends as the hoar rush bends in the wind:
She will sit by the fire, in the smoke, her thoughts on the root and the living branch no more.

The crows still fly to that wood, that wood that is sparse and gapped;
The last one left of the herd makes way by the lane to the stall,
Lowing distress as she goes; the great trees there are all down;
No fiddle sounds in the hut to-night, and a candle only gives light to the hall.

The trees are sparse and gapped, yet a sapling spreads on the joints
Of the wall till the Castle stones fall down into the moat;
The last who minds that our race once stood as a spreading tree,
She goes, and the thorns are bare where the blackbird, his summer songs done, strikes the one metal note.

II

The bond-woman comes to the boorie;
She sings with a heart beguiled
How a hundred rivers are flowing
Between herself and her child.

Then comes the lad with the hazel,
And the folding-star's in the rack:
"Night's a good herd," to the cattle
He sings, "She brings all things back."

Padraic Colum
—*The Dial*

LAST SONG

I will blow my last song to the moon's dingy door
Hastily sealed; I will blow my song through the slit,
Through the cobwebbed crevice between the door and the floor
Where hairy old moon-spider grandmothers nod and knit
I will blow my last song.

Then some night when the wind rustles velvety thick
With moist yellow jasmin-stars, and the smell of rain
Drifts an impatient silver, the door will click
Dreamily ajar, and misty with moon-spider skein
My last song will blow down.

Joseph Auslander
—*The Measure*

FOR A SHY LOVER

If you will poise your forefoot in my pool,
I will not loose a ripple, Beautiful.
Crackle the fern-stems, arch aloft and stare,
See! there's no fright for you, anywhere.
A leaf shall not lift, nor a shade shake
You and your shy love away from my lake.
I know the noon is a blaze for you,
This gaunt forest, a maze for you:
Kneel near a drop of water on stone.
No one comes plunging. You are alone.
Today I am opal tinged with blue,
My color darkens with the glassy heat,
And I listen for hoofs. Am I timid, too?
Noon is my enemy! Thrust in your feet!
Trample this silver, trample this sand,
I will not startle you, Little One; stand
Slim as the larch, there, I'll not take
Even your shade to the naked ache
Of my lessening waters. If you lean,
Another faun, like you, but green
Will flick his ears and curve his throat,
His shadow hoof will lift between
These pebble-splotches. Will you float,
Mingle and drowse and touch me, Beautiful?
If you come down some blown noon to my pool,
I will be quiet, I will be cool.

Genevieve Taggard
—*The Nation*

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BROADWAY, OUR LITERARY SIGNPOST

By Kenneth Andrews

With Sketches by the Author

THIS season will long be remembered as the year of the great famine. It is a hard winter in the theatre. Times Square is a desolate place these days where little groups of resentful men, who once were theatrical managers, gather and bitterly deplore the appalling ingratitude of the public. Plays open in a blaze of glory on Monday night, receive flamboyant notices on Tuesday morning, and creep ignominiously out of town on the following Saturday. The record for low weekly attendance has been broken again and again. The pawn shops along Sixth Avenue between Forty-second and Fiftieth Streets report a banner year. Amateur theatrical companies find no difficulty in inducing professional actors to come and coach them for astonishingly reasonable fees. There is a buyer's strike in the theatre; people simply do not buy tickets.

The reasons for this distressing situation of course are not far to seek. No one has quite so much money to spend as he has been used to, and, as is always the case, the theatre suffers. More than half the plays that have been produced are now in the limbo of forgotten things. That is a high percentage of casualties. It makes the producing of plays one of the extra hazardous occupations; it is hazardous enough under normal conditions and most managers accept the fact and are good gamblers, but no gambler can regularly risk his money on a proposition where the odds are always two to one against him. So it is not surprising that the harassed producer, who has high rents to pay like everyone else, and who possibly has high priced and restive stars on his salary list, burrows back through his files and dusts off the play he made a fortune on years ago. Most managers have a sneaking belief in the time honored maxim of the stage that what has once made money will always make money. So we have had this month, and probably shall have for the rest of the season, the theatre of a decade ago side by side with the theatre of today.

That is a particularly engaging spectacle this season. For in spite of the fact that so many fur overcoats and diamond stick pins are in storage, it has been a season full of gratifying and rather startling things. Who can explain, for instance, the success of a play like "Liliom" in this worst of all possible years? The taste for such a play is surely an acquired one. It has few of the ingredients usually supposed to insure popularity. It has a few ingredients which ordinarily would be supposed to insure prompt failure. The rich burlesque of the scene in the police court in heaven is exactly the sort of scene to ruin a play. It is likely to offend the fastidious; the ordinary theatregoer is likely to resent the demand it makes on his imagination, after he has paid to be amused; it is likely to be over the heads of the remainder of the house.

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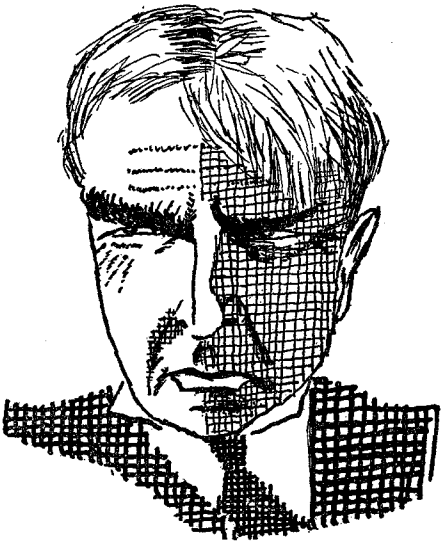
Perhaps that sounds glib, but it is, we think, approximately what a fairly cautious manager would be likely to say on reading the manuscript of "Liliom" for the first time. Yet "Liliom" booms prosperously on. The prosperity of "A Bill of Divorcement" and of "Anna Christie", the satisfactory reception of "The Hero", alter one's notion of what a play should be like to keep the box office man arrogant in an off year. Since it is so difficult for a play to survive the blight of the present stringency, "A Bill of Divorcement" and "Anna Christie" and "Liliom" must have in fairly rich measure qualities which we most want in our plays today. It would be extremely easy to pull those admirable pieces of writing apart and point out to one's own satisfaction just what it is that makes them popular successes; but we think it would be practically impossible for anyone to tell what really makes them popular successes.

Still it is pleasant, and an interesting diversion, to compare these plays with those which made money in another day. Compare "Bought and Paid For" with "A Bill of Divorcement", for instance; or compare "The Easiest Way" with "Anna Christie"; or "Alias Jimmy Valentine" with "The Bat". Of course such arbitrary couplings are unfair and specious, and prove nothing in themselves. No two of these plays treat of the same theme; but still it does seem that those older plays were addressed to a public not so fastidious as we are today. It is not so much in the method that the plays differ as it is in the conception, or rather in the intention of the playwright in each case. From this angle the comparisons are quite striking and worth making. Every one of the revivals which we have had this year, with the doubtful exception of "The Easiest Way", has been brazenly, openly "theatrical" in its purpose and in its method. The older playwrights frankly took advantage of stage conventions which would be too obvious today. They worked with conventions then. They employed



WILLIAM GILLETTE

Very much at home as the wise old ex-crook in "The Dream Maker". The part fits him, for no actor living knows half so much about stage crooks as he.

symbols to represent real life and real people; and we, in those days, willingly accepted the symbols. At least that is the impression one has. It may be that the same symbols and the same conventions support the illusion of our drama today, but at least they are far more scrupulously disguised. And the mere fact that we seek to disguise the conventions so thoroughly is the indication of the change which has taken place in the intention of the dramatist. Where in the old days—ten years ago! —we frankly sought, by any means, the momentary effect, the big end-of-the-act effect, now we make a pretense of simulating life; and we would do so even if we were to rewrite, say,

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"Alias Jimmy Valentine", which aspires to be nothing but a good crook play.

For another reason these revivals are even more welcome. Most people are quite sentimental about the plays they liked in other days, and that sentimentality is an emotion all too sparingly cultivated by the managers. We forget rapidly in the theatre. The drama is deplorably barren of traditions. Few playgoers, even the most enlightened, could name more than one or two of the American actors of twenty years ago. Most of us would have great difficulty in naming the plays of native origin from which our drama of the present has evolved. We regard the theatre as a stopping place between dinner and the Century Roof, a means of taking the mind of the prospect off petty considerations. Yet we take much the same pleasure in seeing again a play we have cared for as we do in rereading a favorite novel. The cultivation of that pleasure makes for a sounder attitude toward the theatre, it creates a saner, sounder taste. When we come to the theatre to see a play with which we are quite familiar we come with a maturer point of view. It is the play itself, as a piece of writing, that we are interested in. We are reminded, whether we realize it or not, that the drama as we have it now is the result of steady and quite logical growth, and that it is a definite expression of our literary impulses. Perhaps it takes a lean year like the present one to stimulate this deeper appreciation, so let us be glad.

LENORE ULRIC

In "Kiki" she has a whole play to herself to display her varied talents. She has scarcely an idle moment during the evening, and everyone else in the theatre, on and off the stage, is breathless from trying to keep up with her.

The new productions of the month have, to say the least, not been distinguished, and they have not been numerous. The Theatre Guild produced "The Wife with a Smile" by Denys Amiel and André Obey, and they did it extremely well. It is a joy to sit through these productions which are, under Mr. Reicher's hand, so smoothly coordinated, where each part is fitted into the whole with such easy precision. The play itself is much more than the shocker it at first appears to be. Of course for most of the second act we are waiting for the revolver to go off and blow M. Beaudet's brains out—and we know this will not happen; but the play is compounded of materials that are quite rich and fine. In the short half hour we are given the history of the married life of the Beaudets. Two or three simple little illustrations make it lucid and plausible. M. Beaudet wants his wife to go to the opera with the party he has invited. She does not want to go. When she insists on remaining at home a domestic crisis is precipitated, which derives its bitterness from years of barbed intimacy. Beaudet is incensed

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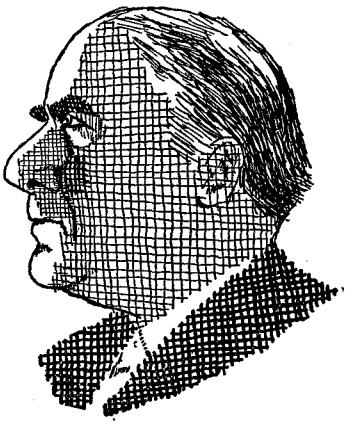
when she finally defies him before his guests. Knowing the one way to punish her most severely he locks the piano before he leaves for the theatre so that she will be unable to amuse herself while he is gone. Her resentment which rises, through these cumulative irritations, to frenzy, is done with rare subtlety; we get a most detailed character portrait of her, which is transmitted with fine comprehension by Blanche Yurka.

"Boubouroche" which was presented to fill out the evening is the sort of French anecdote which, in English, keeps you wondering just how much funnier it was in French. "Boubouroche", no doubt, was much, much funnier.

There is nothing much to Mr. Belasco's adaptation of "Kiki" except Lenore Ulric. We see Miss Ulric as an elfish chorus girl in a bizarre costume including a short plaid skirt, a noisy blouse, and a vivid green turban with a tall curly feather. She looks for all the world like an illustration from "La Vie Parisienne". Later, after she has cooed her way into the home of her manager, we see her in a glittering evening gown. Then we see her take off the evening gown. In the last act we see her in pajamas. But through it all she remains a good girl. Toward the end Sam B. Hardy, as the manager, asks her how she has managed to live the sort of life she has lived and remain pure and unsullied. That was a question we had wanted to ask and we listened closely to her answer, but we have entirely forgotten it. Our impression is that it was evasive. It is another of those tantalizing plays from the French which, you are convinced, must have been pretty racy in the original; and, for that matter, "Kiki" was. But it is innocuous now as a bill at Keith's, which it much resembles. We have a little of everything that the public likes. We have a little song, a little dance, a glimpse of the chorus of the "Follies



ARNOLD DALY

As the husband of the wife with a smile he is one of the meanest fireside tyrants who ever threatened to blow his brains out; and he gives one of the best portrayals of his long career.

Montplaisir", a sleepwalking act by Kiki, and so on. It is decidedly a stunt play; and perhaps Miss Ulric is no more saccharine than she needs to be.

"The Dream Maker" which brings again the perennial Mr. Gillette is not nearly so good as it might have been, and not nearly so bad as you think it is going to be after the first ten minutes of what is probably the stupidest opening a play ever had. It is a good crook story, however, and for most of the evening interest in the ingenious plot takes one's mind off the atrocious lines. It is one of those plays—which we always like—wherein you discover at the end of the first act that nobody is what he has seemed to be. It is a well oiled, smoothly running plot turning about a central idea which is novel and just plausible enough to escape

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being preposterous. Marian Bruce has had a shocking experience during the night, and the wise Mr. Gillette, as Dr. Clement, conceives the idea of deluding her into thinking that it was all a dream. This quite impossible deception is carried out persuasively enough to make it seem quite possible, which is what makes the play interesting. Suggesting a formula that rarely fails to prove effective. The play, in a number of other scenes, treads lightly the line between the thrilling and the absurd. There were titters when the four crooks were writhing in pain, after they had swallowed what we had been led to suppose was poison. With death staring them in the face they sign the papers. The audience gasped at the audacity of the scene; and just before the explanation that the drink is after all harmless, a loud and raucous laugh of derision was brewing. But the explanation comes in time, and the scene becomes quite suddenly a genuinely amusing one. Throughout it is a dexterously turned plot, the framework of a corking thriller; the only thing the play needs, as it stands, is rewriting.

THE DRAMA SHELF

"The Cockpit" by Israel Zangwill (Macmillan). Having written a play on the fusion of the races in this country, Mr. Zangwill now treats of the squabbling of the races in Europe. His belief is that politicians are a menace and he urges their suppression, believing that Europe herself will become a melting pot after this is accomplished.

"University of Washington Plays" edited by Glenn Hughes (University of Washington Press). Four examples of the work done by the students in the play writing course in this university.

"Three One-Act Plays" by Stark Young (Stewart Kidd). Rather tragic in tone, but concise and well constructed trifles.

We did not see "Alias Jimmy Valentine" when it was first produced, and we had always wanted to see it. It is an alluring title; and we had always supposed that the scene where Jimmy sandpapers the ends of his fingers so that he may open the safe was one of the delights of the theatre. Perhaps we expected too much; certainly we were disappointed in the play's revival. The most interesting thing about it, for us, is the way it falls to pieces when you examine it closely.

The first act is chiefly padding. It is rather picturesque padding to be sure, but plainly false and overdone. It leaves the impression that the prisoners in Sing Sing are either lunatics or victims of a perverted artistic temperament which leads them to forge checks and pick locks for the mere joy of practising an exacting art. Jimmy Valentine himself is splashed with this disconcerting sentimentality when, in the second act, his former pals, hoarsely, with many rigid gestures, and with blazing eyes, paint a picture of a bank at dawn, with the grey light just edging the silver knobs of the vaults, and remind the wavering Jimmy of the thrill he used to find in creeping through the window—and, to one's amazement, Jimmy falls for it, or is on the point of doing so when he remembers the girl who helped him to freedom. Well, we did not expect this sort of thing in Jimmy Valentine.

And what magic did Paul Armstrong—or O. Henry—put into this play to endow it with charm and longevity when its third act is simply bosh? This act is concerned almost entirely with the elaborate alibi which Valentine builds up to prove that he is not Valentine but Lee Randall. He has a scrap book with clippings about Randall, photographs of Randall, a group picture of a banquet where he,

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as Lee Randall, is shown in full evening dress at the speaker's table, on the night when Jimmy Valentine was, as everyone knows, in Sing Sing. But what would all this amount to? Sing Sing has on file photographs of Jimmy, front and side, with head shaved; they have his finger prints, and no doubt a dozen other ways of identifying him. The detective has known Jimmy for years. Yet we are asked to believe that he could be deceived by these flimsy pretenses.

As a matter of fact the detective is not deceived at all—which knocks the stuffing out of the big scene of the play. When Jimmy with his bleeding fingers opens the safe to rescue the little tot who is locked inside, nothing really depends on his sacrifice. His identity is already known to the detective. His exhibition of skill might have shocked Rose Lane, and made her suspect him. But she is not even present!

But all this only makes the success of the play more interesting. What has kept alive a play perforated with such patent falsities? Perhaps the infallible appeal of a man who comes back; perhaps the occasional flashes of the O. Henry glamour.

There was, it should be said, one revival of the month which has not aged in the least, and which will probably never age appreciably. That is "The Chocolate Soldier". It is amusing to note how much of Shaw remains in this "unauthorized parody of one of his plays", and it is amusing to note how adaptable Shaw is to the irresponsible foolery of comic opera. Perhaps one reason he resented this irreverent treatment of "Arms and the Man" is that it provides such a disconcerting measure of the philosophizing which sounded rather profound in the play. Another reason may have been that "The Chocolate Soldier" is a much better title than the one he thought of.

And speaking of titles, what would you expect a show called "Good Morning, Dearie" to be like? You would be entirely wrong. It is the best musical comedy of the year.

MOUNTAINS AT SUNSET

By Robert J. Roe

THESE drinkers lie
Sprawled,
Drunk on the sun
And blinking
In old, stained corduroys.

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THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

A Radical of Other Days

THERE is in "A Daughter of the Middle Border" (Macmillan) a mixture of rare sentiment and carefully selected reminiscent detail that makes this second volume of Hamlin Garland's autobiography a book to be read leisurely and with much quiet delight. It is characterized, too, by the measured opinions of a full life. Mr. Garland, it seems, was once a literary radical; more than that, some of his views of life would now be considered by some far from conservative. Strange terms these:—radical, liberal, conservative. Nice tags. Convenient to fasten thoughtlessly. If this is not so strong a book as "A Son of the Middle Border" it is a mellow book, a book sweet in its handling of the closing days of that older generation, the noble mother and father, and of the romance and marriage of the son. Perhaps you will find the literary anecdotes not the least delightful moments: a glimpse of Mark Twain, a talk with Zangwill, wearing a dress suit for the first time among London literary lions. Early days in Chicago and later ones in New York. Perhaps the book loses as an autobiography because it is molded in the form of a novel; but to me, it gains rather as a novel, because of its autobiographical atmosphere. We have much for which to thank the Garlands of the Middle Border.

Papier Mâché Sex

AT last Mr. Hergesheimer has published a new novel. Surely I cannot imagine any woman, wife of a successful golf-playing husband who is beginning to develop a paunch, not wanting to read "Cytherea" (Knopf) in order that she may be led to delightful vaporings as to what her spouse may be doing behind her back. What potentialities it has for upsetting matrimonial equilibrium! It is difficult not to be vulgar in reviewing this novel. We had thought that the shortness of skirts had done away with one sex fetish; but Mr. Hergesheimer not only still uses the traditional fascination of the chorus girl but sets up as his goddess of love, a wax (or was it porcelain?) doll, which typifies the sex unrest of his middle-aged hero. I confess that matrimonial discussion heightened by pungent odors and richly dark settings does not thrill me when it comes from the pen of the author of "The Three Black Pennys". But since it shows the hand of a good craftsman, since it certainly interested me as a curious combination of super-Robert W. Chambers and underdone Freud, I offer it to you for what it is. That it may be an accurate picture of the married set (showing the influence of war and Prohibition) in a certain Eastlake, no one will deny. If the married set in Eastlake is like that, let's not move to Eastlake, or let's not get married. At any rate, why should all this interest so expert a writer as Joseph Hergesheimer? Moreover, "Cytherea" bears all the marks of sincerity. I leave it to far wiser heads than mine to determine why he should have turned out what will be, undoubtedly, a popular novel, and in somewhat the manner of Mr. Galsworthy at his worst.

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Quiet Beauty of Thought and Style

THERE is no one among the young American writers who has written so exquisite a book as this. "Autumn" (McBride) is quaint, thoughtful, wistful. Robert Nathan wrote an earlier novel which I'm told one does not need to read. That does not matter now; for in these pages of the life of old Mr. Jeminy, the philosopher school teacher of a small town, he reaches down into the roots of life and creates a picture that is at once tragic and oddly humorous. This is realism shot through with poetry. If you miss in this beautiful story the rush and tumult of much recent fiction, you will be amply repaid by the discovery of careful writing: well modulated sentences, rhythmic prose, brilliant characterization. A quiet book, a thoughtful one, more a sketch than a novel; but you should be eager to read it. If you read it once, you will reread it, and I shouldn't be surprised if this tale will be found on library tables when most of the year's fiction is forgotten.

Travel Books de Luxe

D. H. LAWRENCE writes languorously and bewilderingly in "Sea and Sardinia" (Seltzer). Color, charm, and an amazing array of emotions flood this beautifully illustrated volume. It is Lawrence the dreamer and mystic brought in contact with the easeful climate and life of a mellowing civilization. Wonderful reading. And there is humor, too, together with those emotions along the gamut from nausea to terror of a volcano. Such writing as this:

> Wonderful to go out on a frozen road, to see the grass in shadow bluish with hoar-frost, to see the grass in the yellow winter-sunrise beams melting and going cold-twinkly. Wonderful the bluish, cold air, and things standing up in cold distance. After two southern winters, with roses blooming all the time, this bleakness and this touch of frost in the ringing morning goes to my soul like an intoxication. I am so glad, on this lonely naked road, I don't know what to do with myself. I walk down in the shallow grassy ditches under the loose stone walls, I walk on the little ridge of grass, the little bank on which the wall is built, I cross the road across the frozen cow-droppings: and it is all so familiar to my *feet*, my very feet in contact, that I am wild as if I had made a discovery. And I realize that I hate lime-stone, to live on lime-stone or marble or any of those limey rocks. I hate them. They are dead rocks, they have no life—thrills for the feet. Even sandstone is much better. But granite! Granite is my favorite. It is so live under the feet, it has a deep sparkle of its own. I like its roundnesses—and I hate the jaggy dryness of lime-stone, that burns in the sun, and withers.

From this it is entertaining to turn to Julian Street's ably written and informative "Mysterious Japan" (Doubleday, Page). This is a volume which even goes so far as to possess an index; yet while it discusses the Japanese from the standpoint of the American nation, it still remains colorful in its tone, with accounts of the dainty geisha and eccentric bath tubs. It is well illustrated, too—by photographs. Mr. Street tells a story well, he analyzes convincingly, and he writes with a skill of dramatizing fact that is seldom equaled outside the ranks of American journalism.

Here are two books well above most travel volumes now in vogue; for both have the mark of sincerity and truth. Obviously, Lawrence is a poet-traveler and Street is a journalist-traveler. From both, the sentimental traveler to the South Seas and elsewhere could learn much.

—*J. F.*

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A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

MR. HOLLIDAY STROLLS ABOUT

By Simeon Strunsky

NOW and then it is given even to the blurb-artist to say the right thing. When the anonymous author of the salutatory on the jacket of Holliday's new book invites you to take a stroll with Holliday through "that deliciously human world which he has made peculiarly his own", he is telling you exactly what you will find inside the covers. But with this caution. Do not imagine that the world which Holliday has made his own is his by right of discovery and sole occupation. It is not one of these out-of-the-way and hole-in-the-corner worlds—South Sea, or lower Macdougal Street, or upper New England—which writers have a habit of clawing out of obscurity and cultivating and exploiting to the last bitter edge of the law of diminishing returns. Holliday's world is the very ordinary world of the daily routine and the morning newspaper; he has made it his own by the great affection he lavishes upon it and the wealth of laughter and wisdom he gets out of it.

This makes another caution necessary. The Holliday method is what I suppose one would call whimsical. But whimsy has come to mean distortion, or if you wish to be kind, transmutation. You take a solitary little fact and smother it in your fancy beyond recognition. You embroider, dilute, inflate, and to the extent of your powers get away with it. The world which you make is your own, but after all it isn't nearly so satisfactory a world as the one that lies ready-made for you. Holliday walks whimsically over the cobblestones of this real world. Most of us who dabble in the essay take one peep through an undertaker's window or sink into a barber's chair and proceed to become absorbed with our own souls. Holliday gets his full objective values out of the undertaker's shop and out of the barber at the Brevoort. This only means that he finds the external life so rich that he does not have to pad out fifteen hundred words with big chunks from his own psychology. If I were to write a piece on taking care of one's self, I should take two or three items from the health ads and proceed to play about with them. Holliday, with that marvelous eye and memory of his, lets you have the much higher fun that abides in the whole story as a story:

> I swear off smoking. I put away the home brew. I do not eat fresh bread. I procure myself overshoes against the rain. I rise with the lark. I (religiously eating an apple first) go to bed betimes. I walk so many miles a day—also skip a rope. I shun all delicacies of the table. I take those horrid extra cold baths for the circulation. I do "deep breathing". I "relax" for twelve minutes each day. I shun the death-dealing demon "worry". I "fix my mind on cheerful thoughts". I "take up a hobby", philately, or something like that. I eat the skins of potatoes. I watch the thermometer in the office and monkey continually with the steam radiator. Everything like that.

The smile allied to the seeing eye—that was the charm of the Holliday excursions in "The Fish Reporter" and "The Dessert of Life" of quickening memory, and it is the charm of the new volume. Years ago, in what I thought afterward might have been a

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moment of recklessness, I spoke of Holliday's genius, but every time I come to test the verdict by a new book of his I find myself ready to stand pat. So I do with regard to "Turns About Town".

Turns About Town. By Robert Cortes Holliday. George H. Doran Company.

THE BRONZE TRUMPET OF FAIRYLAND

By Edmund Wilson, Jr.

ELINOR WYLIE'S "Nets to Catch the Wind" is the latest piece of evidence to the effect that, in America, the women as a rule are better poets than the men. This may sound like a wanton paradox, but consider our chief masculine reputations: the Oppenheims, the Vachel Lindsays, the Aikens, and the Frosts. We have in them a body of verse of remarkable variety and interest, an attempt to do all sorts of impressive things in all sorts of original ways; but when you sift it down for anything that holds its own as first-rate poetry—that is, anything both finely felt and successfully rendered—you are reduced to little more than a handful. These men were more valuable in resurrecting poetry from the grave where Mr. Stedman had left her and in giving her new clothes to wear and making her free of the world, than in actually supplying her with songs that she is likely long to remember.

But the women—the Teasdales and Millays, and their half-dozen lesser sisters (counting out Amy Lowell, who belongs rather to the masculine group)—in attempting a less pretentious thing, have succeeded a great deal better. Beside their sharp and lovely lyrics, the men seem hollow and inept. The women have unforced emotions which say themselves naturally in poetry, and a taste which knows how to choose colors and make every word tell; the men, even when they feel, feel loosely and without distinction and produce monstrosities alike of both the florid and the dry.

Mrs. Wylie, strangely enough—though, as usual, beating the men—beats them this time without the woman's advantage of undisguisedly personal heartbreak. Mrs. Wylie has occupied herself largely with slight fanciful conceits—with velvet shoes and tortoises and fairy goldsmiths—or with quite objective things: one of the best poems in the book—"Bronze Trumpets and Sea Water"—is nothing more nor less than a piece of literary criticism. Did Mrs. Wylie deliberately exclude the more directly personal of her poems? Has she work which might dispute, if published, the laurels of Miss Teasdale and Miss Millay? In any case, she has chosen to challenge criticism, with a thin collection of thirty-three poems, on the sheer strength of craftsmanship and fancy, discarding the tears and protestations which have made the fame of her sisters. And she has succeeded to an extraordinary degree. She has cast the rather filmy fluid of her fancy into the mold of one of the strongest styles which has appeared in our poetry for some time.

It is a style which, unlike many others, never falls down or turns bad. Its accuracy never misses; its colors are always right—two qualities exceedingly rare in contemporary American verse. The "new poetry" has been, among other things, a carnival of literary bad taste. It is difficult to indicate in obvious terms exactly what is wrong with most of it, but one may say that, even when the technique is

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good, there is something wrong with the tone: it is either too dingy or too flashy, or the colors are badly mixed: in fact, it resembles the aspect of the country in which it has come to birth. Now Mrs. Wylie's tone (it is a vague word, perhaps, but I can't think of anything better) is always certain and pure. Who else among us, for example, could have written a passage like this?

> And you may gape for me in vain
> In hollows under the mangrove root,
> Or where, in apple-scented rain,
> The silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

Not John Gould Fletcher: he would have made it something like this:

> Behind the long steel wires of the rain,
> The twisted green-black trunks of the apple trees
> Are huddled in the purple light;
> Red apples spot confused foliage
> And the wasp-nests hang like great grey lemons.

And where else can you find such combinations of fine tone with extreme technical proficiency as you get in the following passages?

> When against earth a wooden heel
> Clicks as loud as stone and steel,
> When snow turns flour instead of flakes,
> And frost bakes clay as fire bakes,
> When the hard-bitten fields at last
> Crack like iron flawed in the cast,
> When the world is wicked and cross and old,
> I long to be quit of the cruel cold.

and:

> The trumpeters of Caesar's guard
> Salute his rigorous bastions
> With ordered bruit; the bronze is hard
> Though there is silver in the bronze.

Think what Mr. Frost would have made of the first: how he would have flattened and enfeebled it. Think what Miss Lowell would have made of the second: how she would have piled up her lacquered hardware for paragraphs and paragraphs, with bugles and buccinæ and the quick-flicking hoofs of the horses and the sun nicking ochre stars from the bronze cuirasses of the knights.

Not, however, that Mrs. Wylie depends entirely upon tone and technique. Hers is a volume which, as I have said, avoids the specifically personal; but it is charged, nonetheless, with an emotion which gives its slight fancies great dignity. It is sometimes tender, sometimes bitter, but for the most part, it is a longing for escape, for withdrawal into silence and peace, "under the roots of the balsam tree", "into a little house I'll build", "in a carven cup, in a deep vault", etc., etc. One wonders about the obverse side of this elfin world of fancy and retreat which is almost all the poet will let us see. This is hardly the sound of the silver horn which her Madman would have us follow. This is hardly the Beauty of which she writes with such a troubling conviction:

> O, she is neither good nor bad,
> But innocent and wild!
> Enshrine her and she dies, who had
> The hard heart of a child.

Can Mrs. Wylie not sound herself the madness of the silver horn? Can she not tell us more of the goddess who rules with so hard a heart?

Nets to Catch the Wind. By Elinor Wylie. Harcourt, Brace and Co.

ALEXANDRA AS PRINCESS AND QUEEN

By Julius Moritzen

CONSIDERING the important rôle played by Lady Paget in bringing about the marriage of Princess Alexandra to Prince Albert of Wales, her introduction to this book seems at first glance all too short. And yet, the few touches here anent Alexandra's personality make clear how the Danish princess, become queen, "scintillates like a pure jewel—lovely to the eyes,

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but far dearer to the hearts, of a nation which had at once adopted her as its fairy Princess". Then on page 62 Mr. Trowbridge shows how the Countess Walburga von Hohenthal, who was engaged to be married to Sir Augustus Paget, the British Minister at Copenhagen, was the means of upsetting the German plans for establishing a new link between the royal families of Great Britain and the Hohenzollern.

It is an old story how the children of Prince Christian of Glucksburg, the heir to the throne of Denmark, contracted marriages that placed them high above their parent before Christian IX himself became a ruler. Also, how the strictest economy had to be practised in the home circle of Prince and Princess Christian in order to make ends meet. But it has been left for the author of "Queen Alexandra" to amplify to what an extent her parents relied upon each other, how Princess Christian, "as the presiding genius of the home, found time for everything. Keenly alive to her husband's welfare, she kept herself well posted in Danish politics, and by corresponding frequently with her numerous relations, to whom she paid yearly visits, she was well informed on current European affairs."

The inherent trait of domesticity that characterized Alexandra as Princess of Wales and Queen of England is directly traceable to the influence of her parents. The love of home never left her and now, as she looks back upon a career rich with memories of a glorious past, the Queen Mother cannot fail to recall how through all these years the British nation has revered her for herself as well as for the exalted position she occupied as the consort of Edward VII.

It is quite apparent that Mr. Trowbridge has not attempted so psychological a study as Lytton Strachey in his "Queen Victoria". Not that there was not sufficient material at hand for a minute picture of Alexandra. But just as Queen Victoria's career closed with her passing so, in the case of Alexandra, there is yet to be written *finis* to her life work. Quietly she is laboring for the betterment of mankind. England alone knows how her charities develop and broaden. In the evening of her life she must be happy in the knowledge that in the land that took her to itself as its own, as well as in that Danish home country, thousands upon thousands rise up and call Alexandra blessed.

If a German princess and not Alexandra of Denmark had become the bride of the Prince of Wales the history of the world would have been different than it is.

In 1860, shortly before the Prince's visit to Canada and America, there were rumors abroad that a matrimonial alliance between the heir to the British throne and a Princess of Prussia was in contemplation. The German newspapers, indeed, solemnly asserted that it had all along been determined—arranged, in fact,—at the time of the wedding of the Princess Royal with the young Prince Frederick William of Prussia.

In England, on the contrary, the idea of any German marriage was distinctly unpopular. It was generally believed that the object of these alliances, of which the Germans had always been fond, was to make the whole European Royalty one vast family, the stalk or root of which should be in Germany. From the sarcastic comments of the English press it was evident that the project, if really contemplated, would meet with bitter opposition.

Not the least interesting is that part of the book which describes how the future Lady Paget brought the Princess Alix, as she was affectionately called, to the notice of the Princess

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Royal whose favorite maid of honor Countess Walburga was. The tour of the Princess Royal having proved unsuccessful with regard to finding a suitable partner for the Prince of Wales, Queen Victoria was told about the Danish Princess. The engagement and the wedding are part of history, but Mr. Trowbridge presents so fine a picture of the great event that it deserves to be quoted here in part:

> It was such a picture as an artist of the Renaissance might have conceived. In this spectacle Queen Victoria, who gazed down upon it from a quaint pew in the wall above the channel on the level with the organ, was the most striking feature. Clad in black to her gloves, her sombre attire relieved only by the blue ribbon and star of the Garter, grief and care were stamped on every line of her face.... Till the arrival of the bride, however, the bridegroom was the centre of attraction....The pleasure experienced by all in beholding him was deepened by the expectancy with which his beautiful bride was awaited.

The description of Alexandra's wedding gown and jewels is one of the most charming features of this book. Mr. Trowbridge lets Charles Dickens describe her further:

> Her face was very pale and full of a sort of awe and wonder. It was the face of no ordinary bride, not simply a timid, shrinking girl, but one with a distinctive character of her own, prepared to act a part greatly.

It would take too long to treat of Alexandra's political influence on English politics, and as a matter of fact this was a negligible quantity with her. She did, however, do her best to uphold the cause of her little country, Denmark, when Prussian avarice finally led to the war between the Danes and the Germans. This is a chapter in international history that does not redound to the credit of the great powers of that day who had promised to aid Denmark against her southern bully.

It is easy enough to find fault with any book that attempts discussion of great personalities. "Queen Alexandra" may not be the complete recital of this notable career, as indeed it could not be, but it is worth reading and being treasured as a contribution which affords pleasure and adds information about one of the most beloved characters among royalty today or in the past.

Queen Alexandra. By W. R. H. Trowbridge. With an introduction by Walburga, Lady Paget. D. Appleton and Co.

A THREE-DIMENSION NOVEL

By Alexander Woollcott

WRITING to his great brother from Leland Stanford University, the late William James, while expatiating honorably enough on that benign and pleasant seat of learning, went on to say: "The drawback is, of course, the great surrounding human vacuum—the historic silence fairly rings in your ears when you listen." He was thinking not only of his own tolerable Cambridge but of the Europe he had known since boyhood, the land where every bridge and sidewalk is a very hubbub of human echoes, where every stretch of road and patch of woods is populous with the ghosts of a thousand familiar comedies and tragedies.

There is a kindred difference between books. Most of the present output have that human vacuum, that historic silence; and they seem the more flat and cardboardy when they are challenged by the murmurous depth of such a rich three-dimension book as "The Girls". This is the wise, honest, teeming novel wherewith Edna Ferber moves visibly forward along the road she has been traveling for ten years.

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It carries over into a man's size novel the humanity and the tingling dramatic force which have marked the best of her short stories. It constitutes a dazzling leap past such a fair-to-middling book as "Fanny Herself" which started off superbly and then, half way through, relapsed feebly into the commonplace, as if Miss Ferber had lost all interest in it and were thinking of something else while her pen jogged dutifully along. Perhaps she was thinking of "The Girls".

"The Girls" is a part of the most alert and shrewdest thought of its day —peculiarly so in its acute sense of time, its swing with the rhythm of history, its war-bequeathed consciousness of the tininess of human life and the tolerant perspective which that consciousness permits. Peculiarly so, too, in its understanding of (and respect for) the new generation which is so bewildering and scandalizing its remote and alien elders. We have had quite enough clucking and sniffing over these serene upstarts with their disconcerting manners and it is high time for novels like "The Girls" and plays like "A Bill of Divorcement" (both written by singularly perceptive women) to salute their sense and their honesty and their courage.

Charley Kemp, the third of the three girls of whom Edna Ferber tells the tale, does and says most of the things which invoke agitated, what-are-we-coming-to letters to "The Atlantic Monthly", but she is, nevertheless, the chief reason why you close this book with a feeling of high hope. Back of her, praying for her, stand her two spinster aunts, the other girls. Old Aunt Charlotte and youngish Aunt Lottie have, each in her day, been thwarted and beaten back and down. Indeed the whole force of "The Girls" is hurled against just such interference and continuous management as they suffered. Listen:

> Often and often, during these years, you might have heard Carrie Payson say, with bitterness, "I don't want my girls to have the life I've had. I'll see to it that they don't."
>
> "How are you going to do it?" Charlotte would ask, with a curious smile.
>
> "I'll stay young with them. And I'll watch for mistakes. I know the world. I ought to. For that matter, I'd as soon they never married."
>
> Charlotte would flare into sudden and inexplicable protest. "You let them live their own lives, the way they want to, good or bad. How do you know the way it'll turn out! Nobody knows. Let them live their own lives."
>
> "Nonsense," from Carrie, crisply. "A mother knows. One uses a little common sense in these things, that's all. Don't you think a mother knows?" a rhetorical question plainly, but:
>
> "No," said Charlotte.

Carrie Payson is Lottie's mother—an extraordinary portrait of a bold, admirable, and destructive woman; and the gritty touch of her and the harsh sound of her are among the best achievements of the book. For sheer adroitness in execution, for an amazing aptitude in sketching an unforgetable picture with a few sharp strokes, consider those chapters which convene the scattered family for the obligatory weekly dinner at Mrs. Payson's ugly house in Prairie Avenue. It is after just such tours de force that you wonder the more at Miss Ferber's occasional recourse to the rubber stamps of lesser writers—as when she tries to circulate such depreciated currency as the word *grim* and actually—oh, horror of horrors!—lets that blessed Charley weep at the uselessness "of it all".

The Prairie Avenue house, with its once magnificent green carpet (a thing of sailing vessels and floral wreaths which reached from the front parlor into the back parlor) and its Ole Bull chair, ages visibly as the young people wither and give way to new young people in the procession of the story.

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Its associations accumulate like the odds and ends of undiscarded finery and the boxes of undestroyed letters and photographs which are part of the sad and hidden things in every house that has been lived in. The dust has flown in the writing of "The Girls".

Prairie Avenue? That means Chicago, of course—for "The Girls" is Chicagoan through and through, quite defiantly Chicagoan, as though Miss Ferber were not only decently resentful of the old Frank Norris taunt, but personally a little tired of having all lowly love making staged on Central Park benches and all costly love making unfurled on Riverside Drive.

The Girls. By Edna Ferber. Doubleday, Page and Co.

TAHITI TO PARIS

By Percy N. Stone

A REPRESSED revolt against accepted civilization and an atavistic desire for aboriginal simplicity seem more responsible than any possible royalties for the deluge of tales of the South Seas. The avidity with which some of them are welcomed shows, too, a longing for a certain freedom on the part of the readers. The greater the output, of course, the smaller financial gains for the writers. But that selfsame production means a diminution of imaginative effort, and volumes that can be taken as fact. With everybody writing of the alluring islands, fiction will be too easily recognized.

"My line, I fear, is facts as I find them." So writes Ralph Stock as his beloved Dream Ship drifts about the Marquesas Islands. Somehow he need not have said it. There is created a feeling of confidence all through the book. Brave indeed was that crew of three—two men and a girl—to pilot unaided their bit of a fishing vessel from England, through the Canal and into the abundance of the Pacific. In a most readable style Mr. Stock has told the experiences the Dream Ship brought. Each page throws off happy exhalations of enthusiasm.

James Norman Hall and Charles Nordhoff, who alternate chapters in telling of the Faery Land they found, leave to the reader's judgment the veracity of much of their book, for they specialize in repeating tales told them by "oldest settlers". It is not a bad idea, either, for in a way they are preserving mythology without trying to edit it. They had their experiences, and only admiration can go to their frankness in recording, along with the deliciousness of the islands, the cockroaches and other inconveniences which stay-at-homes might imagine had no existence. The illustrations by George A. Picken feed that imagination and prove a distinct advantage over the too-literal photograph. Until a lens can feel the romance that biases the human eye, it cannot be fair, no matter how truthful.

Sydney Greenbie sees the many islands as but a corner of "The Pacific Triangle". There is much haunting description of the natives and those proselytized from conventional labors, but the real purpose of the book seems to be to lead the unwary reader into a serious consideration of the political problems netted about the little pin dots on the largest map. The poly-

The Cruise of the Dream Ship. By Ralph Stock. Doubleday, Page and Co.
Faery Lands of the South Seas. By James Norman Hall and Charles Bernard Nordhoff. Harper and Bros.
The Pacific Triangle. By Sydney Greenbie. The Century Co.
In the Eyes of the East. By Marjorie Barstow Greenbie. Dodd, Mead and Co.
A Loiterer in Paris. By Helen W. Henderson. George H. Doran Company.

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gonal situation is presented clearly by a student of the conditions, and the author's conclusions are so placed in the book that they may be skipped easily without detracting a whit from "the impression of loveliness which is the essence of the South Seas". But, alas, there is a suggestion of tragedy. Mr. Greenbie writes: "Within the next few generations there will be a South Seas, indistinguishable and without variety."

It is the Orient—China, Japan, and India—of which Marjorie Barstow Greenbie writes in anecdotal fashion. Keyed for romance, she found it around every corner. There were little incidents most travelers might have overlooked which she has used for many a pleasing page, and there was the greater experience which ended in her marriage to Sydney Greenbie. The glamour from that seems to have thrown a golden light over everything, but adds rather than detracts from the value of the book. Sometimes in this series of lightly connected experiences the alert-eyed traveler seems as naive as a child; again almost as wise as Confucius himself.

But there is another civilization, and Paris is its capital. One might get so fed up on copra smell and dark skins that more accustomed things would seem better, yet it is hard to shake off the soporific influence of the South Seas, where time seems not to matter, to consider seriously Helen W. Henderson's suggestions for "doing" Paris. She calls her book—which is admirably suited to it purpose—"A Loiterer in Paris". After vicariously drinking deep of more leisurely climes, one feels rushed from this architectural triumph to that artistic but, after all, artificial glory, until "loiterer" seems a jest. Yet for him who would know those things contained in Paris which tourists are expected to find, Miss Henderson's effort is most suitable.

WHITMAN THE APPRENTICE

By Fillmore Hyde

PROFESSOR EMORY HOLLOWAY presents in two pleasing and scholarly volumes the fruit of some years of intelligently directed labor. He need have no fear that Messrs. Rodgers and Black have stolen any of his thunder in "The Gathering of the Forces", a title under which they recently published some of Whitman's writings in the Brooklyn "Eagle"; for the Professor's book is more comprehensive and in almost every way better than his rivals'. Mr. Holloway knew that there had long been needed some sort of collection in which the poet's reverent, but sometimes mystified, admirers could find specimens of their idol's preparatory writings; and he has aimed to satisfy this need. Certainly his book is an admirable exposition of the tremendous experience and thought which we know must have been precedent to the writing of "Leaves of Grass" and which, in the authorized "Complete Prose", we can find exposed only at second hand and autobiographically.

Superficially it is a curious fact that Walt Whitman can be greeted in one quarter with smiles, indulgence, condescension, and at times contempt, and in a second quarter—which, of the two, we hazard to be the more sensible—can be loaded with superlatives such as few save the founders of philosophies or religions have been privileged to enjoy. To a certain extent the depth of feeling he has been able to inspire in his friends has forwarded

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his popular reputation even more than have his own words and the eulogies of his champions; and it is true that many people have studied Whitman's writing, as they might study Buddhism, in order to find out the reason for its exorbitant fascination. He is a man whom men admire with a strange irrational intensity; to himself he was a universe, and to his admirers he sometimes becomes a universe.

These strangenesses cannot be attributed altogether to his ecstatic and philosophic animalism. "Leaves of Grass" is not least remarkable as an illustration of how genius and character which, in their lifelong period of growth, undergo not even the smallest and most trivial experience without an ineradicable alteration, will represent the living individual in their blossoming. Given the sunlight, the water, and the soil, then the quality—even the form of the blossom is foreknown. From his earliest moment to his last Whitman, more clearly than is the case with other artists, can be seen to be a partner with his expression and an instrument by which fluent experience could be transformed into comprehensible and changeless language. He once wrote reflectively that his life had been an "ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America". His book is his life; his life is the life of all the races: there is no enlightenment in knowing a few lines of a poet who deplored form as the artist's greatest handicap; it is not possible to know a little of him. This truth, together with the astounding fact that he succeeded in expressing that kinship of the universe and man which is realized suddenly and gloriously, but alas! inarticulately by most men and women at adolescence, will in part explain the devotion of those who really know Walt Whitman. The poet in expressing himself has made it possible for others to read what it is impossible for them to write.

Any memoranda of such a consistent thinker and writer cannot fail to fit in an instructive manner into the scheme of his character. Professor Holloway's collection, particularly that part of it which relates to the poet's early years, will be received respectfully by students; and gladly by those who wish to know more of Walt Whitman and the "Leaves of Grass" and who long to understand more fully how that extraordinary man came to write that extraordinary book.

The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman. Edited by Emory Holloway. Two volumes. Doubleday, Page and Co.

RING W. LARDNER—SERIOUS ARTIST

By John V. A. Weaver

"LAUGH with Lardner"—for years one has been accustomed to that slogan. It has found widespread response. I have been asking different sorts of persons recently what they thought of Lardner, and the answer was in all cases similar, although couched in varying terms. One highbrow said he was "most amusing, even in spite of a bit of vulgarity at times"; another serious thinker said he was the "most refreshing rib-tickler in the business"; a flapper said, "My dear, he's simply screaming", or words to that effect; a business man said, "Al-

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ways amusing"; and even a horny-handed artisan, who sat next me in a smoker, remarked, glancing up from a Satevepost, "Say, that guy's a clown!"

Myself, for years, ever since I first saw those "Friend Al" squibs in the "Wake of the News" column which used to decorate the Chicago "Tribune", have been convulsed over his pictures of the native dumbbell; his characterizations, in American language which is flawless in its transcription, have made me laugh as no other humorous writings can. And the small essay, "Symptoms of Being 35", has had even more than its usual risible reaction. It certainly is conducive to guffaws.

Then I read "The Big Town", and saw the struggles of a South Bender to put on dog in the Metropolis, and incidentally to palm off his beautiful moron of a sister-in-law on one victim after another; meeting frustration in the latter effort until finally the fair idiot is disposed of to a "comic"; and defeated on every side in his social endeavors. And then I recalled some half-dozen of his isolated short stories; and it occurred to me that more than once, in the midst of a loud laugh, I had caught my breath, and felt a small shock of sadness over the spectacle of ambition, hopes, emotions, in these boneheads; and something besides mirth over the spectacle of ludicrous humanity is always present, unmistakably, in the most furious of Lardner's burlesques.

And so I wish to suggest an amendment to the time-honored Lardner slogan. The thought is not so subtle, I know, and not so novel; but I do not believe it has been expressed before. Ring Lardner is not altogether the surefire wielder of the slapstick; he is, in point of fact, a serious artist, a realist of the first rank, and a master of pathos as well as of bathos (where exactly is the border line, to be sure?).

I suggest, "Laugh—and sigh—with Lardner."

Symptoms of Being 35. By Ring W. Lardner. The Bobbs-Merrill Co.
The Big Town. By Ring W. Lardner. The Bobbs-Merrill Co.

THE BLACKBIRD

By Robert McAlmon

EVERY time I went out of the farm gate
To the road, to look toward the city
And think whether it would frighten me to be there,
And be able to go out upon the edge of the earth
Where the horizon cuts it short,
So that perhaps I would fall off and never stop falling,
The blackbird would look at me warningly.
She had the same gentle reproving manner Aunt Bessie wore.
Even though the blackbird had no chin at all
She still gave quite the impression of having a double chin.
There were many ways in which the blackbird resembled my aunt.

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RECENT BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

WHEN Henry Arthur Jones dipped his pen in satire to write "My Dear Wells" (Dutton), he must have stabbed it so hard against the bottle's bottom as to endanger the nib. Whether or no one agrees with the author respecting H. G. Wells's vulnerability, the reader who loves a good scrapper will experience intense interest in seeing the author thwack Mr. Wells's head with his pen-shillalah. And, of course, the reader will register a humane hope that Mr. Wells's head may stand the forceful blow—and a sportsmanlike wish to see him land a wallop or two in return for his critic's courtesy.

In spite of having won a prize as the best undergraduate production from Columbia University in 1921, David Sentner's "Cobblestones" (Knopf) shows few signs of being undergraduate in character. It is not finished work, but this ex-student, ex-reporter, ex-doughboy has learned to express his rather grim fancies in terse, striking imagery. He has a bitter philosophy, a keen eye for exteriors, a ragged rhythm,—and a future.

The emphasis in Hugh Walpole's new book (Doran) is all upon the attitude of "The Young Enchanted" toward life, not at all upon the outcome of adventures. Henry Trenchard falls through a window upon an experience in which beauty has an ugly setting, while his sister Milly runs to seek romance in other unlikely places, only to meet such disaster as would have "crushed" an earlier heroine. But the English young people who have survived the war have a tremendous faith in the ultimate rightness of things if only one maintains a brave attitude, and Walpole's very real people have always something of the spirit of Sir Walter Raleigh. Incidentally, Walpole does hit out strongly at the faddism of the very new in literature. His thesis in this most likeable of his books is that young and old have, after all, only been carrying the same torch with no likelihood of letting it be blown out by any wilful winds.

"Charles" of "You Know Charles" (Holt) is not an important person; no one could write his memoirs, but his household revolves about him, and he keeps it spinning at a smart pace, and usually in the wrong direction. His wife's view of him at close range, as interpreted by Margaret Breuning, makes an interesting book full of neat, small hits, truthful and pertinent.

Three of his friends have given their "Reminiscences of Anton Chekhov" (Huebsch), each one emphasizing the traits which appealed most strongly to him. Gorky, characteristically, harps on the irony of Chekhov's fight against banality in a banal world. Alexander Kuprin writes of Chekhov's sensitive soul, and his great pity and sympathy. I. A. Bunin dwells on his hero's reserve, his simplicity, his gentle humor, and his objectivity, his life lived in the open, almost in the dust of the highway, and filled with the troubles of half the people in his province. Together, they present a very sympathetic picture of a great artist and of a man greater than his art.

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A. A. Milne has many friends in the world; amused subscribers to "Punch", amused audiences at comedies, amused readers of "Not That It Matters"; and his latest book will add to the number. "If I May" (Dutton) is a very entertaining collection of whimsical essays which it is not extravagant to call excellent. From the literary and artistic point of view the book is a good one. It happens that the author's mind functions in so rich and so humorous a way that he has only to offer his arm in order to make his readers chuckle. Thoughts, whimsical and otherwise, not horseplay, not dialect, not altercation, are the tools with which Mr. Milne works.

The Russian Revolution emerges triumphant, is the claim of Albert Rhys Williams in "Through the Russian Revolution" (Boni and Liveright). He regards the ordeal of famine, pestilence, and bloodshed which came in the revolution's wake as an incident—important, but still an incident. The destruction of the State apparatus of Czarism is held by the author as the thing of supreme importance—the means and resulting chaos being secondary. The book abounds with personal incidents and illustrations.

Shaw Desmond's "Gods" (Scribner) is rich in thought,—almost too rich, like wedding cake. It is the story of a man seeking a satisfying religion. From the iron-bound comfort of the Catholic Church to the misty abstractions of the latest cult or the wild fanaticism of the tent-evangelist, he is sympathetic but unconvinced. We see men worshiping power, beauty, patriotism, and the author remains impartial. It is all the more irritating because it is so obviously sincere —and non-committal. Finally we are given a hint that love is the divine attribute. We are left with the impression that this is rather a new idea, though it seems singularly like one set forth by the shores of Galilee. The book has fine qualities, it is even artistic in spots, with a musty-smelling picture of English middle class life, and a background of Ireland in the manner of Arthur Rackham.

Attempting to be free from academic restraint, James N. Wood, a serious American engineer, in "Democracy and the Will to Power" (Knopf) fervidly untangles his first six pages with a pseudo-scientific resume of all that could have happened—if nature were so inclined—a number of million years ago. For the rest, he makes a discovery which places him at his ease: that we have minority rule only by consent of the gross and ignorant majority. A discovery, by the way, discovered by innumerable economico-philosophic discoverers. He is an avowed disciple of Frederick Nietzsche, and therefore sees in the individual genius, all beauty, progress and the never-to-be-discontinued economic mastery of a dominantly greedy few. With unconstrained horror, he views the idea of a "Utopia of peaceful brothers". So long as men retain their virility, he sees war and brutality. "Men devoid of brutality are devoid of sex." As to woman, he is an unrepressed misogynist. He beholds her as a mere litter creature to bear and rear man's offspring. Democracy he believes has caused a "material deterioration of the will of the male", due to our political and industrial equality.

Archibald Marshall wrote "Peter Binney" (Dodd, Mead) twenty years

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ago. It has recently enjoyed its first American printing. There is humor of almost delicate structure, and the bigger beams of near-burlesque in the tale of an English father who joined his son at Cambridge. It could probably stand condensation, but Mr. Marshall admits its faults as those of less experienced days. It is especially adapted to Marshall enthusiasts.

Sixteen slight, exquisite poems make up Laura Benét's "Fairy Bread" (Seltzer), a book composed surely for a child's delight. The verse forms are simple, the ideas handled with a charming, fanciful imagination, and with individuality. Only a very few of the poems ask questions of life which even grown ups cannot answer.

Pierre Loti uses the reciprocal love between a sensuous native girl of Africa and a French soldier stationed in the Senegal, to symbolize the hold with which Africa grasps this unwary itinerant. "The Sahara" (Brentano) may lose much in translation, as most foreign books do, but Marjorie Laurie has preserved enough to make the book vivid with the exotic and perhaps unclean charms of the setting. Tragedy follows the inability of the man to tear away the fetters with which this daughter of the Sahara has bound him—or is that weakness itself the tragedy?

"In One Man's Life" by Albert Bigelow Paine (Harper) is a biography that reads like fiction. Composed of "chapters from the career of Theodore N. Vail", it describes clearly and interestingly the life of the man whose efforts made possible the general development and extension of both the telephone and the telegraph. Theodore Vail is made to stand vividly before us, both as a youth and as a mature man; we can watch him in every phase of his long career. Mr. Paine has mastered the art of portraiture, and accordingly his book would make entertaining reading even were it not intrinsically valuable for the facts it presents.

When Stephen Leacock, speaking of his many fond memories of great actors, says, "Forbes Robertson I shall never forget: he owes me fifty cents"; and when he tells of his amateur theatrical ventures in his inimitably funny way, we must admit that the essay of today "ain't what it used to be" in the time of Emerson and Spencer. When Hilaire Belloc croons a rustic lullaby with the faint odor of newmown hay permeating his "Mowing of a Field", it is hard to believe that the essay is anything but a delicate fabric of pleasant, far off day dreams. As we are about to decide that the essay is a much abused institution, we turn back to Christopher Morley's preface and reread his definition: "The essay is rather a mood than a form." That settles it. We waste no more time wondering whether or not some of the delightful "Modern Essays" selected by Mr. Morley (Harcourt, Brace) are true essays, but lean back in the chair and philosophize with William Osler, dream with H. M. Tomlinson, and abandon ourselves to the most undignified hilarity with A. P. Herbert, Stephen Leacock, and Don Marquis. There is satisfaction for the most fastidious reader in this volume—rich, lasting pleasure; for, without sacrificing one iota of literary quality, it has been compiled to suit many and varied tastes.

"The Romance of His Life and Other Romances" by Mary Cholmon-

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deley (Dodd, Mead) is a confusing book. Here are short stories with a pastoral English setting, told in a quiet, humorous, slightly ironic way—the last quality due, perhaps, to the continuous use of the first person (a first person whose identity changes in every tale); yet there is an element of tragedy, for most of the stories are the romances of middle-aged people, and there is something so uncomfortably pathetic about middle-aged people carrying growing sentiments from the past into a future of decay.

Somebody said that in man curiosity reaches its most lofty (or was it morbid?) height. Especially is this true of the desire to know of the private lives of great people. "The George Sand—Gustave Flaubert Letters", translated by Aimee L. McKenzie (Boni and Liveright), give an insight into the lives of two great authors little read and less appreciated in this country. There is a naïveté about this Platonic love affair that is a decided relief from the usual run of material concerning the immorality of geniuses. Flaubert's lugubrious attempts at humor, and "Mr." Sand's spontaneous wit; the vain efforts of the vivacious woman to argue the old duffer into optimism, all in a spirit of cordial friendship, make satisfying and innocent reading. And there is just enough historical data in the introduction to render the perusal of these letters biographically illuminating. The book, typographically, and from the point of view of binding, is a masterpiece in itself.

There is a poetry in which the English excel, dependent not at all upon imagery, but on leisurely observation, clear vision, and such a love of earth as makes the chronicling of it joy. In his "Poems: Second Series" (Doran), J. C. Squire follows the school of John Freeman and Edward Thomas a while, then reaches back to older classic forms and forward to an easy, swinging, individual rhythm of his own in embodying his sensitive, sincere, and romance-lit reactions to life.

Imbuing metaphysics with a force and popularity sufficient to induce the Governor of Arkansas to proclaim a State holiday for the purpose of putting his idea into practical application is the achievement of Arthur Somers Roche in "The Day of Faith" (Little, Brown). The protagonist of the story is the affirmation: "My neighbor is perfect." The book is a bold exposition of a fundamental truth, embellished with sufficient plot interest to hold the attention and with character delineation adequate for an effect of reality. The metaphysical aspect of the novel is superficial enough to avoid controversy and to rescue an entertaining story from the whirlpools of propaganda.

To those who relish thoroughness as applied to historiography, "The Dauphin (Louis XVII)" by George Lenôtre (Doubleday, Page) will have a strong appeal. The work is exhaustive to tediousness, even going so far as to tell what the unfortunate little prince had to eat the day his queen mother was executed—strawberry jam, if I remember correctly. As a reference book for students of aspects of the French Revolution the volume should prove invaluable. It will, however, scarcely appeal to the lay reader who has little time (and less ambition) to follow up authoritative but unending cross references and bibliographical allusions.

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FICTION IN DEMAND AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE IN COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The following lists of books in demand in December in the public libraries in the United States have been compiled from reports made by two hundred representative libraries in every section of the country and in cities of all sizes down to ten thousand population. The order of choice is as stated by the librarians.

NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
3.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
4.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
3.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
4.	The Obstacle Race	*Ethel M. Dell*	PUTNAM
5.	The Sheik	*E. M. Hull*	SMALL, MAYNARD
6.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
3.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
4.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	Alice Adams	*Booth Tarkington*	DOUBLEDAY

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
3.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
4.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
5.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
6.	Three Soldiers	*John Dos Passos*	DORAN

WESTERN STATES

1.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
2.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN
3.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
4.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1.	If Winter Comes	*A. S. M. Hutchinson*	LITTLE, BROWN
2.	Main Street	*Sinclair Lewis*	HARCOURT
3.	Her Father's Daughter	*Gene Stratton-Porter*	DOUBLEDAY
4.	Helen of the Old House	*Harold Bell Wright*	APPLETON
5.	The Brimming Cup	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT
6.	The Pride of Palomar	*Peter B. Kyne*	COSMOPOLITAN

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young to have been through the helter-skelter experiences with which his publishers credit him. Amy Lowell tells us that she remembers very distinctly the time when he came to interview her in his reportorial days. She says that she interviewed him, and found that he was planning to write various things. His plans have now matured, for the first of the works he told her of was "The Charmed Circle". He told us the following anecdote not long ago:

> In the days of my earliest twenties I couldn't quite make up my mind which it was I wanted: a career behind the footlights or a career behind the pen. Perhaps the real turning point came late one afternoon in an Iowa hotel writing room, where I'd established myself between rehearsal and performance to scribble. Donald Robertson came in—he was the star with whom I was learning the rudiments of the profession. I can see him now as he entered and found me there, thoughts miles away from the footlights, pen rushing eagerly across all the hotel stationery in sight.
>
> "What are you doing?" he demanded.
>
> "Just writing a little—"
>
> "Writing! Buttering yourself all over the universe, when instead you ought to be up in your room before the mirror, studying your face—studying expression, gesture."
>
> All in a flash it came upon me then. "What interest have I in a mirror? What is there for me in interpretive art anyhow?" And in simple defiance I turned back to the task of feverishly buttering myself over the universe.

James L. Ford's "Forty Odd Years in the Literary Shop" is likely to recall, to those of an earlier generation, literary conditions of two decades ago, when the first Literary Shop papers were printed. Those were the days when, for example, what was known as the "kail-yard" school was at its height, when the Barrie of the earlier style and Ian Maclaren and Crockett were at the full flood of their American popularity, and a glossary was needed for the understanding of a "best seller". Mr. Ford invented what he called the McClure Village of Syndicate, a model literary community, situated on a convenient and healthful rise of ground overlooking the Hackensack River, and populated by nearly four thousand able bodied authors, poets, and syndicate hands, together with their wives and families. There was none of the traditional Grub Street hardship about the Village of Syndicate. The "hands" were comfortably housed and fed, drew steady wages, and had their hours of outdoor relaxation, when they indulged in such sports as "putting the twenty pound 'Harper's Bazar' joke" and "chasing the greased publisher".

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER

Are your own children interested in books? If they are, from now on we hope that they will find this Children's Book Corner of the Gossip Shop a place in which to develop this interest. We shall offer book prizes each month for the best contributions from boys or girls fifteen years old or under. Then, we want you to encourage the children to write to us about books, even when not trying for the prize. We'll recommend an occasional volume here, too; though at the present moment the only one that comes shooting into our mind is Hendrik Van Loon's "The Story of Mankind".

The essays for the February contest should be in the hands of the editors on or before February twentieth. They should be three hundred words in length, and on one of the following subjects: "What Poetry I Like Best, and Why" or "The Last Book I Read and What I Think of It". They should be written in ink on one side of the paper only, and addressed "Children's Book Corner", in care of THE BOOKMAN.

The first prize will be a copy of "The Book of Pirates", the second, of "The Old Tobacco Shop".

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of a torch from one hand to another, was supplied one day recently by James Stephens, the wizard who wrote "The Crock of Gold", "Mary, Mary", and "The Demi-Gods". Reveling over "Moby Dick" with Samuel McCoy, who has just returned from Ireland, Stephens said:

"Did I ever tell you how I first heard of the book? George Meredith, who was about twenty years old when 'Moby Dick' was first published, read it, recognized a master in Melville, and passed the book on to his friend Watts-Dunton. Watts-Dunton, equally enthralled, urged Dante Gabriel Rossetti to read it. Rossetti ran with it to Swinburne, crying out that Swinburne must read it. Swinburne, finding in it the roar of the sea described as he himself could not, with all his music, silently passed it on to Oscar Wilde, then the most glittering star among the literary lights of London. Wilde, a Dubliner, handed the book on to another Irishman, young William Butler Yeats, making, as he did so, an epigram on Melville's greatness that would be worth repeating—if I could remember it. Yeats, coming back from London to Dublin, brought a copy of the book with him and presented it to George Russell, 'A. E.', essayist, poet, painter, and seer, commanding him by all the ancient gods of Eire to read it at once. And 'A.E.', chanting solemn rhapsodies through his beard, handed it on to us, his disciples. I pass it on to all I know, as the greatest prose work in the English tongue.

"Melville", added Stephens thoughtfully, "was the last of the school of bards. He was wider than Shakespeare."

Pronounced on the afternoon of August 7, 1921, in the dingy little dining room of the hotel in Galway town on the west coast of Ireland, where bearded sailors from all the ports of the world once drank Spanish wine in the Galway inns....

Nora Bayes

Today the sleet is beating across our window mercilessly. We have a cold, we have been taking aspirin, and it is time to take the glass of raw milk which our able assistant holds for us. We are growing old. Alas! All this atmosphere reminds us of a trip that we took recently to our native state. We had hoped to find Vermont covered with snow. Instead we found nothing but mud, and in Rutland, that delightful lady Margaret Warde, who writes the Betty Wales books. This year shows a singular unintelligence in women's clubs. Last year wherever we happened to be all the ladies had read the recent books. However, it's earlier in the year. We still like Vermont better than any other state. Returning to town we were dozing in our seat, watching dreamily a couple opposite us who were obviously bride and groom, when we were suddenly awakened to activity by the violent playing of the wedding march on an accordion. We were not so startled as the bride and groom. Then we found around and about us Nora Bayes and her vaudeville troupe. The rest of the afternoon she played the grande dame to the car—her tenor sang for us, and occasionally from the depths of her compartment the lady herself, effective in pink quilted wrapper, would emerge. What an entertaining life, this.

Edward Alden Jewell, the author of "The Charmed Circle", looks far too

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ton, John V. A. Weaver, Margaret Mower, Sherwood Anderson, and many another. The later addition of "The Critics" as a curtain-raiser to this play of Charles Vildrac's was an entertaining piece of stage business; for Mr. Ervine has laid his one act in the lobby of a theatre where the first-night gentlemen tear down the play. With a nice sense of humor Mr. Duncan has inserted lines from the New York papers which limn his own production. There has been no other play but "Anna Christie" this year so sincere and so moving, and "S. S. Tenacity" is filled with humor, too. Andreyev's "He Who Gets Slapped" in the hands of the Theatre Guild is an amazing production. It is filled with beauty and color, its mood is most moving. That we think we understand it, does not mean that *you* will. Not the least exciting moment for us was when we discovered that Teresa Helburn, the executive genius of the Guild, was actually appearing as one of her own circus group! We've never seen an audience have such a good time as at "Bulldog Drummond". Alternately amused and thrilled. As for us, we felt as we did when the Nancy Boyer Stock Company used to play "The Third Degree" in our home town "Opera House". We saw Earl Carroll, the youthful producer, not long ago. His theatre, the Earl Carroll, opens on Washington's Birthday. He is determined to give repertoire next year and here's hoping that he succeeds. This young man has the bravery of Samson as he starts out on this new venture—and what a fine workshop he has in this splendid new theatre!

From the far west, Hugo Folliard sends us news of a local bard:

Every college nowadays has its campus poet —along with its campus hero, wit, and nuisance. Sometimes the poet sits among the mighty; often, however, he rebels with—or without—his undergraduate classmates. (We remember how hard Professor Robert Morss Lovett of the University of Chicago tried to induce the Powers That Be to create a chair, classes, a course in the writing and appreciation of poetry to be given by the gifted young man Howard Mumford Jones.) The college at this town—Pullman, Washington—oh yes, there's a school here, and a very important one, too, at least in football—is no exception.

Elliot C. Lincoln, associate professor of English—Abe Lincoln, familiarly—is the bard; his "Rhymes of a Homesteader" were issued last fall. Mr. Lincoln can be seen any morning stalking amiably to College Hall; or early Saturday, if you idle through the two main streets of this seven-hilled city, you may observe a tall slim figure, tanned of face, clear-eyed, breaking into smile, drawing after him a child's wagon wherein sits his son and heir. Indeed, this thinness of Mr. Lincoln is emphasized by his height; he was standing—sideways—next to a telephone pole, and we saw both sides of the pole distinctly. He seems to be all the same width all the way up—if, as Hermione suggests, you know what we mean.

His fellow sufferers, during intervals of classroom irritation, read his verse and like it. (Though some of the youngsters have been bitten by the tarantula and spout, contra, Remy de Gourmont's "Litanie de la Rose".) Harriet Monroe in "Poetry" gave the volume a decent sendoff with comparisons to folk ballads; the book stores tell us the "Rhymes" are having a steady sale. The verses, ranging from a Kiplingesque swing to Robert Frost's low-ebbed fusions, still have a unique flavor of their own, the tang of Montana; for it's to the mounting hills across the Panhandle that Mr. Lincoln's heart clings. (We believe that there, too, he found his wife.) Mr. Lincoln is inundated at present with such masterpieces as "College Traditions at W. S. C." (600 words: be concrete), or "Arnold vs. Huxley" (term paper: give references), and states that when he can take time from such important considerations he will again tempt the muse.

Once we had another poet here—a poet who wrote about and for children. But, as to this other, as Kipling did not remark, sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof....

The history of "Moby Dick", Melville's titanic dramatization of human fortitude and implacable resolve, has been the history of a book's laudation by literary artists who recognized in Melville an artist who transcended all that they themselves could do in words. The most interesting genealogy of "book recommending", the passing on

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ing to talk books to you, sell you books, or just talk. We hope she will make it quite a BOOKMANLY place.

The following extract from a letter of Mary Johnston whose novel "Silver Cross" is to appear shortly, seems to us to be extremely helpful to the young author, or any author for that matter:

More than a writer, I am student, perhaps scholar. I have my own lines of investigation, my own syntheses to make. I cannot scatter in my reading. If I gave my eyesight and my *time to, for me, random lines—books that are* true ladders for others but not ladders for me —it would be spendthriftness and hampering. Out of a general list sent me perhaps one or two, perhaps more, perhaps not any, would be *my* nutriment. Reading those others, talking of them, etcetera, would mean neglecting to read and to talk of some other book that *is* my nutriment.

I have had occasion five thousand times in *life to wish that I had not "thought aloud".* Thought to one's self is a fluid thing. Such and such a probable pattern or course of things is held in contemplation in the mental hand before the mental eyes. But it is subject to modification by tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. One knows it is so, and keeps it flowing, and so surprises are not surprises and changes are not changes. But think aloud to others, and you have put forth something that forthwith crystallizes and stays rigid. And things have to bend to it, or at the best there must be explanations and explanations. The moral of all which is that I feel that during the past year or more I have thought aloud too much as to changes in all things, givings up and takings on, later manner, and what not. It would have been better to let each book as it comes take care of its own reaction. Better for the author not to have attempted explanations or predictions of her own course. It is hardly important enough for one thing, and for another she will surely be involved in all *manner of inconsistencies between prediction* and performance.

As to what "The Theatre of Tomorrow" will be, even Kenneth MacGowan, whose book of that title is as elaborate a book on stagecraft as has been published for some time, probably would rather prophesy than wager large sums. At any rate, when we recently attended together the first night of Cosmo Hamilton's "Danger" we found it suddenly profitable to dwell very largely on the future. MacGowan, slender, enthusiastic, vivid in his manner and in his presentation of ideas, has many plans both for the theatre and for himself as related to

Kenneth MacGowan

the theatre. At present he is busy as critic of the New York "Globe", as editor of "The Theatre Arts Magazine", as a lecturer on the drama and, incidentally, he is planning and writing several more books. But some day he will turn *producer*. That is inevitable; for you have only to talk with him five minutes to discover that, together with a poetic feeling that is rare among dramatic critics, his first interest is in the practical theatre, in working with plays. He is not a contented bystander but is of the theatre itself. Meanwhile, until you can see his first production, you will be able to read his excellent book. Our first nights have been few and far between this month. The first performance of "S. S. Tenacity" thrilled us. It was an interesting audience, too, with Brock Pemberton sitting alongside Louis De Foe, and neither of them seeing the beauty of this extraordinarily beautiful piece, with Gertrude Ather-

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From Springfield, Churchill, North Bristol, England, F. Hadland Davis sends us the following tonsorial anecdote of Thomas Hardy:

During a recent visit to Dorchester I heard many delightful Hardy stories from one who has acted several of the cronies described with so much humor in the Wessex novels. It was one of life's little ironies that I was not permitted to make use of them.

Saddened by this pathetic reservation I visited a local barber. Barbers are communicative fellows. They not only absorb town and village gossip, but it is part of their business to impart it to others without the least hesitation.

I sat down before an old-fashioned cheval glass that somehow recalled Madame Mantalini and her dressmaking establishment. While the barber cut my hair I tried a subtle conversational opening. I mentioned Percombe in "The Woodlanders", and asked him if he had ever bought a Marty South's hair and sold it to a Mrs. Charmond. I watched the barber's face reflected in the mirror. It did not kindle with the glow of a bookman. His scissors made a semicircle behind my right ear that suggested a question mark. I tried again, wondering how "Penguin" of the "Observer" would have succeeded in extracting from Hardy's work references directly, or indirectly, bearing upon the hairdresser's art.

"Festus Derriman", I said, "used a razor at so early an age that at twenty-three 'a fine rust broke out upon his countenance on the first day, a golden lichen on the second, and a fiery stubble on the third to a degree which admitted of no further postponement'."

Finding that the hairdresser still remained silent, apart from the click of his scissors, I made a more direct attack, and asked him if he knew Thomas Hardy. The barber expressed the opinion that he considered the novelist sadly overrated. "Such a quiet little man," said he. "You'd never know it was Thomas Hardy. Such an old overcoat, and such a baggy umbrella!... He used to talk to me about London as it was years ago when cock-fighting was all the rage....Never read his books—and never want to....

"Americans seem to think a lot of him. One came in here not long ago. Says he: 'Seen Thomas Hardy?'

"'Oh, yes!' I says. 'He sat in the chair you're sitting in.'

"'In *this* chair?' shouts the American, no end excited.

"'Yes,' I says. 'I cut Mr. Hardy's hair.'

"'Did you keep the hair you cut off?' asks the customer, putting his hand in his pocket.

"'No', says I, 'I *didn't*.'

"'Well, that's a pity,' replies the Yankee; 'because if you had I'd have bought it!'"

More enterprise in Chicago:

The Illinois Woman's Press Association is holding an Exhibition and Book Sale to boost Illinois authors and their publishers. They launched the idea last December with such success that the Chicago Historical Society regarded it as an historical event, and for this season offered the use of their building where the imposing foyer is reserved for the book display, the library for intimate talks by authors, and the auditorium for a Book Pageant and one-act plays.

Illinois presents a list of two hundred names, among them: Clara Louise Burnham, Mary Hastings Bradley, Emily Calvin Blake, Georgene Faulkner, Henry B. Fuller, James Wilford Garner, Elizabeth Gordon, William Rainey Harper, Robert Herrick, Emerson Hough, S. E. Kiser, E. K. Harriman, Edgar Lee Masters, Samuel Merwin, Randall Parrish, Elia W. Peattie, Ernest Poole, Opie Read, Earl H. Reed, Donald Robertson, Carl Sandburg, Lorado Taft, Maude Radford Warren, Stanley Waterloo, Henry Kitchell Webster, and Eugene Field, George Burman Foster, William Vaughn Moody, Myrtle Reed, and Bert Leston Taylor.

There's a new bookshop in New York City in which we are especially interested. Hector MacQuarrie's Bookshop, it is. Hector, whom you know as the author of "Tahiti Days", considers that he has graduated from the staff of THE BOOKMAN to this delightful shop of his next to the Hotel Lafayette. It has already become quite a community centre. Unfortunately Mr. MacQuarrie himself was called to Australia by a family illness; but if you drop in some afternoon to his shop you'll find Dorothy Stockbridge, the young author of "Paths of June", will-

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is the scene of his novel, was first settled by colonists from the south, that the march of colonization changed and the hordes poured west from New England until finally the middle west became a great mixing ground for the peoples of those states whose lodestone was once Massachusetts. It is of this development that he has written, of horse thieves and of gentler folk whom he and his family knew and loved. (It is even possible to love thieves. We know. One of our dearest friends is an ex-bank robber.)

We liked, in the November magazines, the poems "Last Song" by Joseph Auslander (Measure); "Gargoyles of Notre Dame" by Henry Bellaman (Poetry); "Dead Calm" by Robert J. Roe (Voices); "Paul's Wife" by Robert Frost (Century); "Ghost" by J. V. A. Weaver (New Republic); "For a Shy Lover" by Genevieve Taggard (Nation); "Three Wishes" by Elinor Wylie (New Republic).

Dodd, Mead and Company announce that they have purchased the entire American rights and interest in the publication list of John Lane Company, including all stocks now in this country, all American copyrights, and a working alliance with the house of John Lane, Ltd., London. This purchase includes such literary property as the books of W. J. Locke, Anatole France, G. K. Chesterton, Walter Crane, Kenneth Grahame, Laurence Hope, Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Leacock, Rupert Brooke, Francis Thompson, Max Beerbohm, Ernest Dowson.

Elizabeth Cobb, daughter of the humorous Irvin, wrote the following playlet. We don't know whether she has given us permission to use it or not. At any rate, we stole a copy.

THE INFALLIBLE THREE
or Finding America

A Pageant

Characters:—Mr. George Jean Nathan, Mr. H. L. Mencken—by special arrangement with the Good Lord.

Scene:—A Forest, dark and sombrely lit, crowded with well-known actors, writers, playwrights, and critics, all silent but looking fearfully behind the trees as if in search of something of which they are afraid.

The stage grows blacker and a fierce wind begins to blow. Under cover of the darkness enter Nathan and Mencken in heavy cloaks. They carry whips in their hands and, under their arms, their own books. A flash of light reveals them to the crowd on the stage. Registering horror and fear, crowd runs away.

Mencken and Nathan laugh sardonically and snapping their whips begin to sing:

The Infallible three
Are we! Are we!
Those who oppose,
We simply dispose.
With only a word
We chastise and curb.
The small and slight
Just tremble with fright.
They shiver and shake
at our nod—
We are Nathan
And Mencken
And God. (They point above.)
Yes, probably, possibly God.

They begin a dance of triumph and then sing again:

We are the Infallible three
Are we! Are we!
We clamor for Tolstoy and
Freud,
To others we're horribly rude.
We shudder with horror
At making a dollar
That is not truly artistic
We are so altruistic—
We are
Mencken
And Nathan
And God. (Pointing up again.)
Yes, possibly, probably
God.

They stop and listen. Cheers are heard in distance.

Chambers, Chambers
Down with you.
Rinehart, Hurst,
You go too—
Porter on a high chair—
Who put her up there?
Cabell! Cabell! Cabell!
Rah!

Mencken and Nathan step forward and say:

That is the echo from all the Main Streets in the country who are all nicely dissatisfied now—
We taught them how.

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ideas. He has changed not only the form of his magazine, but the direction. We have heard his plans for the future and know that it will take months to develop them; but, even in its first numbers, it was possible to feel the working of a vivid personality. It will be increasingly true. Gilbert Seldes is a forceful, direct young graduate of Harvard. He has the opportunity of doing far more for American literature than any of us at present realize. If we do not always agree with his uncompromising opinions and his ideas of art, we can yet say that he publishes much of the best writing that is done in these United States.

John Carter, the young gentleman who caused so much editorial comment when he replied to Katharine Fullerton Gerould's "Atlantic" essays on the young (by the way, her full-length novel "Lost Valley" has just appeared), has returned from a long sojourn in Europe. He tells us that he has now left the diplomatic corps and is about to renew his career as a writer which started so gaily with "These Wild Young People". He tells us the following of Rome's American literary centre:

Although those who come to Rome expecting inspiration to leap upon them from forum or church or from the exciting campagna are disappointed, and leave having written nothing save a few sonnets choked with classicism, writers who have work in hand and are seeking leisure and isolation have come to look upon Rome rather than Paris as the literary centre for Americans in Europe.

With Robert Underwood Johnson as the late and Richard Washburn Child as the present American ambassador, the atmosphere has shown itself particularly congenial to American writers. Such writers as Edgar Lee Masters, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sinclair Lewis, Alfred Kreymborg, Stephen Vincent Benét, as well as lesser lights, have come to Rome in the last year and have there found the time for work that they would never have found in Paris.

Indeed, Alfred Kreymborg is actually publishing in Rome a new American magazine called the "Broom"—apparently an attempt to link American art to universal art, and of course, modernism to the ends of its paragraphs.

Sinclair Lewis is there for the winter, at work on a new novel called "Babbitt".

The home of Edgar Mourer, the correspondent of the Chicago "Daily News", and author of a book on the Italian situation, is as much a centre as is any place for the *circolo americano*, although the Caffe Greco on the Via Condotti is also a rendezvous.

With the opening of the opera season and the Augustio concerts there is better music available in Rome than in Paris, while to rival Bernhardt Rome can still point to Duse, playing again in Ibsen.

Rome boasts no Latin Quarter, no Café de la Rotonde, no Montmartre, and so, temptation removed, is more fitted for serious work than for hard drinking.

The Director of the American Library in Paris reports that the list of accessions of the municipal libraries of Paris for 1921 contains the title of one French book about the United States, the work of Professor Charles Cestre, entitled "Production Industrielle et Justice Sociale en Amérique", and two American books translated into French, ex-President Wilson's "History of the American People", and Francis Grierson's "Valley of Shadows".

Other translations of American books are: Theodore Wesley Koch's "Books in the War", Emerson's "Essays", stories of Edgar Allan Poe, Bret Harte, O. Henry, and Jack London, together with James Oliver Curwood's "Baree, the Wolf-dog" and Edith Wharton's "Age of Innocence"; a total of eleven books.

The only periodical in the list is "Munsey's". Goodness gracious!

"Vandemarck's Folly", a novel of the middle west by Herbert Quick, we have not yet read; but we have met the author, a gentle, elderly man with a broad background of wisdom and humor. He tells us that Iowa, which

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and other novels by the younger men, and to hear Dr. Cross of "The Yale Review" explain how the younger Americans approached realism through the eighteenth century novelists—particularly interesting to us since our favorite novelist is Laurence Sterne. Then we dropped in at Webster Hall to see the revival of the Greenwich Village carnival. The first figure that attracted our attention was Violet Kemble Cooper, in the balcony. A magnificent vision in white crystal. Ridley Wills, in a high hat and side burns, informed us that we are not romantic. Whereupon we journeyed to Heywood Broun's, where Ruth Hale and Beatrice Kaufman were giving a literary affair, so to speak. Here one saw many lions —particularly those who roar through the pages of the New York "World". Incidentally, we think that since we ourselves were born (journalistically speaking) on that paper, we can say that it seems to us to be growing more splendid every day. H. G. Wells was there, looking very embarrassed, very happy, and a trifle bewildered by the skit which we believe to have been written by Alexander Woollcott (not of the New York "World"). Zimbalist we encountered, and Witter Bynner, Franklin P. Adams, and John Peter Toohey, whose first novel is announced for early publication. As the New Year approached John McCormack sang it in, with fittingly tender and familiar airs. So far as we were concerned, this was the end of the evening; but our Fashion Editor, who is younger and more ambitious than we are, tells us that a certain part of literary New York then adjourned to 59th Street Childs's, where it finished the night by eating cornflakes and drinking milk, and watching dawn break. Well, good luck, Literary New Year, say we.

The other evening at the National Arts Club, friends and admirers of Mary Austin gathered to do homage to her at a most entertaining banquet. All the speeches (with one notable exception) were excellent. Mrs. Austin herself spoke with force and insight on American literary currents. Among those who paid high tribute to Mrs. Austin's work were Henry Holt, Gilbert Seldes, Cosmo Hamilton, Carl Van Doren, Henry Canby, Maurice Francis Egan. Mary Shaw read one of Mrs. Austin's poems. To us, one of the most interesting things about the evening was the presence there among the guests of honor of three editors who have come into prominence during the past twelve months: Glenn Frank, of the new "Century" (and we may well call it new), Henry Canby of the "Literary Review" of the New York "Evening Post", and Gilbert Seldes, managing editor of "The Dial". Mr. Canby, as a former Yale professor, has kept the academic note in his work; but he has succeeded, it seems to us, in giving to his careful weekly survey of the world of books, a human note that is unusually clever and often extremely provocative. The change in "The Century" has been apparent to the most casual reader. Glenn Frank, an able writer himself, has been hospitable to new writers and to liberal

Glenn Frank

Henry S. Canby

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THE GOSSIP SHOP

W. L. GEORGE, that international authority on womankind, is again in America with a pleasant new Mrs. George. We found him one morning at the Ritz, being rapidly interviewed and nervously photographed. Mr. George tells us that in spite of many adverse reviews "Ursula Trent", his last work, sold more copies than any previous volume of his. Here's for unfavorable criticism! That same noon we met Rupert Hughes for the first time at a lunch given him by Mr. Goldwyn. Mr. Hughes is enthusiastic about the motion pictures. He was introduced by an excellent lunch and Irvin Cobb, as entertaining as ever, with a good foil in Roy McCardell sitting close by. Mr. Hughes made an excellent speech, in which he found it necessary to mention several times the name of Burton Rascoe as a critic of the motion pictures. We liked what he had to say, and we are convinced that he is fully as successful a motion picture producer as he is a novelist. Later in the day we met Gertrude Atherton for the first time. She, too, had but recently arrived in town from the coast. We have since met a charming lady, who as a little girl used to act in Mrs. Atherton's plays. It seems that when they were in school together in California as children the novelist's writing instincts were already developing, for she wrote diminutive dramas which the young people performed in their spare moments. Mrs. Atherton's new novel, "Sleeping Fires", will be published shortly. It deals with such contrasting elements as old San Francisco society and life in the old slum district of "Five Points" here in New York City. We found much concerning our modern young people to discuss with Mrs. Atherton. As we were talking a hurly-burly hubbub without drew us to the window. Squirming black lines of men—pink fists waving—Johnny Dundee was to fight in Madison Square Garden! In the evening to a dinner given for a young man about to be married, a young man not literary, whose friends one by one rose to tell of him as hero in prep. school football games, as the hero of a great Yale-Harvard contest, as the hero of one of the most daring exploits of war aviation. This is what we call a heavy day.

New Year's Eve found literature in New York City flourishing its gayest cap and bells. Early in the evening (comparatively, at least—ten o'clock) we attended Watch Night at the Authors' Club where John Erskine, its president, presided with his usual tact. It was a joy to see Henry Holt, the veteran publisher, and to hear Major George Haven Putnam tell of the first time he saw and talked to Thackeray, on the same evening, too, when Eleazar Williams, considered by many to have been Louis XVII, the lost Dauphin of France, patted him on the head. Then there was the delightful gentleman who showed us a series of letters from John Addington Symonds which he keeps tenderly in his coat pocket in memory of the days when he and the English critic were correspondents. Perhaps the most interesting thing of the evening was to hear Mr. Putnam's opinion of "Erik Dorn"

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ers and theatre directors. The Public Prosecutor, urged by Professor Brunner, some time ago brought charges against Gertrud Eysoldt, the famous Wedekind actress and manager of the Kleines Schauspielhaus, and all her principal actors and actresses, for presenting an immoral play—Schnitzler's "Reigen". The scenes of this play are undoubtedly daring, and could hardly be shown except on the Continent—they are, however, infinitely less immoral than every Viennese operetta, and the effect of the play is sombre and tragic, as Schnitzler intended it to be. The play had to fight for its life when it was first put on, many months ago, and scenes of rowdyism occurred, as I described at the time. But the management won, the public and the theatre attendants suppressed the disturbers, and the play has been running ever since. That "Reigen" is pure art was attested by the well-known dramatic critic Alfred Kerr, Bernhard Kellermann, author of "The Tunnel", "The Ninth of November", etc., and a number of equally brilliant public personalities. Against the "Reigen" performances there appeared as witnesses some small officials, country teachers, and heads of various moralistic societies—a pretty assembly of muckrakers whose naive ideas of art and the theatre occasioned much laughter in court. Brunner has lost the case, "Reigen" has been declared to be a work of art, and the book, which had also been confiscated, will now be once more set free. Meanwhile Brunner had secured the confiscation of a beautiful work of art issued by the well-known art publisher Fritz Gurlitt. This was a de luxe illustrated edition, limited to 750 copies at 2,000 marks, of Schiller's "Venus Wagen". Lovis Corinth and other famous artists had made the pictures and the book, although belonging to "Erotica", had a high cultural significance, and could not on account of its limited appeal be considered as a "circulation of immoral pictures". Nevertheless Gurlitt was forced to pay a 1,000 mark fine and withdraw the book. Brunner did not rest. He secured the confiscation of the subscription copies of Verlaine's "Femmes" and "Hommes", and of Aubrey Beardsley's "Venus and Tannhäuser" published in a beautiful de luxe edition by Messrs. Steegemann of Hanover. Again the publisher must pay a fine. A daring, but brilliant novel by a rising young literary man, Curt Corrinth, the art value of which was vouched for by a number of prominent literary men, and a novel, treating of a medical subject connected with hysteria in a psychological manner and written by a specialist famous in Berlin medical circles, fell before Professor Brunner's lance. Then the literary world cried halt! The result of the "Reigen" case, popularly known as the "Brunner case", had shaken the position of the German Comstock. A mass meeting was called by the "Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller", the league of German authors, to protest against the "danger threatening spiritual freedom and artistic creation in Germany". We now hear that Professor Brunner has retired from his post as art expert and his place is to be taken by a committee of real literary men who know the difference between the pornographic and the artistic erotic book, play, or picture. The German Comstock is down and out.

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER

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the shores of her domain after a naval battle, and she realizes that war has broken out in the world. But to sum up a tale like this, is nothing short of criminal. Its charm lies in the language, the perpetual surprises, the delicate, sensuous, sinuous, absurd construction of the story, and above all in that peculiar, sweetly ironical style which Giraudoux has created with "L'Ecole des Indifférents", and brought to perfection in the present book.

There is no taboo against good war books in Europe, and Jean Galtier-Boissière has added two volumes, "En Rase Campagne" and "Loin de la Riffletie" to the valuable series that includes "Les Croix de Bois" by Dorgelès, "La Vie des Martyrs" by Duhamel, "Ma Pièce" by Paul Lintier, and a few others—not many others. Galtier-Boissière, chief editor of the free and lively magazine "Le Crapouillot", is one of those who "saw it through" from beginning to end, and his testimony has nothing of the amateur interpretation of war authors with small political conclusions. If the expression *real stuff* applies to anyone, he certainly deserves it.

In Paris, "the thing" is to talk about Gobineau. Many people used to quote him, but few had read his works, which were out of print. In fact, it is in Germany that he had found the widest following. There was a "Gobineau-Vereinigung", and there is a Gobineau collection in Strasbourg. It seems that the author of the "Essay on the Inequality of Human Races" is now coming into his own, as several new editions of his books have recently been published.

Arthur de Gobineau was essentially an aristocrat—by birth and by temperament. During his career as a diplomat, in Athens, in Stockholm, in Teheran, in Rio de Janeiro, he leisurely composed his "Asiatic Studies", his "Religions and Philosophies of Central Asia", his "Pleiades", and actively corresponded with the most brilliant men of his time; Mérimée, Tocqueville, Wagner were his friends. After his death, the pan-Germanists made use of his theories and tried to "annex" him as a protagonist of German superiority. There was a misunderstanding about that. Let those who are interested in the controversy follow the advice of Emile Henriot, one of his recent commentators, and refer to Gobineau's famous "Essay" itself. Those who want a specimen of his qualities as a writer of fiction, will find a typical story, "Le Mouchoir Rouge", in the "Revue Hebdomadaire" of December 3, together with a good biographical study.

The Prix Goncourt for this year—the most important annual award in the world of French letters—has been given to a colored writer from Martinique, René Marin, for his novel "Batouala". The news seemed to overjoy M. Sarraut, French minister of Colonies and head of the French Delegation in Washington, who is the "white father" of all the negroes, Berbers, Annamites, Canaques, and other dark children of the French colonial empire.

PIERRE DE LANUX

Germany and the Censor

GERMANY has experienced her Comstock—and has routed him, root and branch. His name was Professor Brunner, publisher of the "Kunstwart", and he was the art expert attached to the Police Department. Under his brief reign there fell showers of confiscations upon publish-

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our 5,000. There lie before me five articles assembled in the last few weeks from five German journals, each of which deals with the crisis in German literature. The one that merits unqualified respect is by Professor Oskar F. Walzel. He attributes the whole of the "crisis" to what is now known in Germany as *Expressionismus*, but claims that in time those who read will have become accustomed to it and will blush at the thought that they once found it so irrational if not quite proof of utter decadence.

An expressionist is nothing more baffling than the opposite of an impressionist. The latter cannot see the forest for the trees. The former cannot see the trees for the forest. The impressionist gave so many details that his picture as a whole became blurred, his moral vague. The expressionist gives so few details—so little life *à la* Balzac—and daubs his canvas with so much metaphysical symbolism, that you wonder why he does not have done with it all by designating his "characters" as the various vices and virtues of human nature, after the fashion of a mediæval Mystery; making no pretense at all at depicting men and women engaged in earthly occupations.

There is no crisis in European literature; the situation is not even critical. It is merely evolutionary. War does not to be sure create literary geniuses; but it does change the popular view of life. If out of war came poets, then poets are made and not born. But the familiar adage is as true as ever. If literature is an artistic visualization and faithful reflection of life, it cannot hope to remain the same when life itself has changed. And life has changed in Europe, particularly in those countries that recently fought each other to the death.

Samuel Pepys, that quaint sage, once exclaimed: "Lord! To see the absurd nature of Englishmen, that cannot forbear laughing and jeering at anything that looks strange." It is however not merely Englishmen who provoke such observations from those who stand apart and watch the passing show. All peoples do it. And they do it with especial consistency where and when literature is involved; for literature is first of all a personal matter. A new form is apt to offend, a new tone may disrupt old friendships. It is in literature that novelty breeds distrust, particularly when there is so much in life to make people distrustful.

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD

French Notes

"SUZANNE et le Pacifique" is the title of Jean Giraudoux's latest volume. In France, too, the Pacific islands are in fashion. Should the fashion change, though, "Suzanne" and her maker are there to stay.

American readers know Giraudoux through his "Campaigns and Intervals", admirably translated by Elizabeth Sergeant. "Amica America" recorded the impressions of the young officer and diplomat who came over as a military instructor of the Harvard unit. Since then, "Adorable Clio" and the precious little book "Elpénor" added to Giraudoux's reputation. In "Suzanne et le Pacifique" he has given free play to his imagination, and thrown a young French girl of today on a desert island where she spends month after month in the familiar company of strange birds and stranger flowers, until one day, in the autumn of 1914, dead sailors from England and from Germany are washed up on

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wondered at that today the English people are the most novel-ridden people in the world." Comment may be brief. England is merely suffering, in places, from too many novels. Her "crisis" is about on a par with the solicitude of the man who, attempting to cross Broadway, fears that the world is rapidly becoming overpopulated. But there is a shortage of people in Montana.

Augusta de Wit delivered a lecture recently in Rotterdam on the Dutch novel during which she took occasion to remark that the epic in the Netherlands is not all it should be. It never was, for perfection is not of this world. Her anxiety however we leave with her, confident that some excellent work is being done by the fellow fictionists of Louis Couperus.

In France it has become the custom to write under some such caption as "Le roman français d'hier et celui de demain", and to deplore the fact that the French novel is no longer being read, which is manifestly untrue, or to contend that it must undergo a change, which it will, or to point out the changes it has already undergone, which is merely a privilege of historical criticism. One writer says that the French novel of the future must have a soul, and more than this, it must have the atmosphere of a soul.

Well and good, if these be the prerequisites of the French novel of tomorrow, the writer of these lines, whose familiarity with modern French literature is *assez ténue*, takes pleasure in informing the French that they have two writers who should satisfy their demands: Georges Duhamel and Paul Claudel. They have, of course, others, but these will suffice for our purpose.

Claudel is fifty-four years old, has been in the consular service for thirty years—he has just been transferred from Copenhagen to Tokio—, is a Catholic of the Catholics, and in writing seems neither able nor anxious to get away from the religious motif. Everything he writes has a soul and the atmosphere of the soul. He is as unlike Balzac as Keats is unlike Kipling. He believes that the war has created a revival of religion in France and writes in this faith. He may call his creations plays but they are stories, tales, romances. Of him Duhamel has written an appreciative life.

But this was some time ago. Duhamel's latest book is entitled "Les Hommes Abandonnés" and consists of eight *histoires*, each telling a tale of an "abandoned" or unfortunate human being somewhat after the fashion of that strange book Duhamel brought out while two million Americans were in France but which is known, unfortunately, only to a few of them, "Civilisation". The book is listed in this column because a sagacious French critic said of it when it appeared a short while ago that "if we were living in an age that was less preoccupied with other things, and if the magazine were not making such serious inroads on the novel, its appearance would be a literary event".

Comment may again be brief. The French people are restless, and their writers are striking out on new paths. No Frenchmen ever wrote such verses as those of Claudel. And what Frenchman ever wrote a series of short stories, bound them together, gave them a collective title, published the result as a novel, and then had his contemporaries speak of it as a potential literary event?

The situation is most interesting, however, in Germany, where there were published last year approximately 36,000 new books as contrasted with

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tal as a masterpiece in modern Italian literature. "Notturno" is the result of a hopeless period of artistic decline, and as such, it reflects a striking moral and ethic insensibility: an unexpected poverty of creative power. I am far from denying the importance of D'Annunzio's personality and work in modern Italian literature, but as I said before, I would not judge him as a politician nor will I doubt for a moment the active and striking part he took—first in our going to war, then in the war itself. But, despite admiration of his uncommon endowments of physical courage and of sincerity, it is necessary to state in a loud voice that this "Notturno" of his is a book which brings no new spirit, no new form to our literature; that instead of adding something to the poet's former work it rather detracts something from it. The book is a failure, and D'Annunzio's personality suffers from it in an artistic and civic sense because of his egotistic preference of himself to his country. Rather a severe and harsh judgment this, but such as "Notturno" cannot but provoke.

GEROLAMO LAZZERI

When Novelty Breeds Distrust

GYLDENDAL, a strange name in cis-Atlantic territory a few years ago, but as familiar now as any, thanks to the importation of good things from Norway and Denmark, offered a prize last November of 100,000 kroner (about $28,000) for the best novel written by a native and resident Dane or Norwegian before March 1, 1923. As to theme, no conditions of any kind were stipulated. The novel is to be judged solely on its merits as a work of art.

It is of course quite impossible for any publisher to do anything of this kind without making the tongues of malice wag. His competitors accuse him of prostituting inspiration in the interests of circulation. His authors, particularly those who instinctively feel themselves ineligible to inclusion in the list of prizewinners, remark, oracularly, that literature is not advanced by the distant vision of specie coined by sovereign authority. Aspersive criticism of Gyldendal's plan has been so excessive that the venerable house has issued a long statement, the short of which is as follows: Since the beginning of the modern European novel, that is, since the appearance (1774) of Goethe's "Sufferings of Werther"—the firm of Gyldendal was founded in 1770—, the Dano-Norwegian novel has been preeminently either propagandistic, or sociological, or psychological, or irreverent toward the muse in some other way. To receive the manuscript of a bit of narrative prose that was written solely for art's sake would be distinctly refreshing. We have consequently offered this prize.

Gyldendal's statement contains a pronounced element of exaggeration born of nagging and annoying criticism. The incident could be neglected entirely were it not for the fact that within the last two months, word has been passed around also in England, Holland, France, and Germany that the epic literatures of these countries are facing a crisis.

During the first week of December, E. K. Chambers lectured in Westminster on Sir Thomas Malory. In introducing him, Lord Ernle observed that it was a remarkable fact that the first book ever printed in the English language was, like Sir Thomas Malory's on the Arthurian Legends, a novel, and the oldest the people yet read was a novel. "It is", he said, "not to be

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FOREIGN NOTES AND COMMENT

D'Annunzio's "Notturno"

FOR some time past Italian public and literary circles have been quite unmoved by any event, but the latest work of Gabriele D'Annunzio, "Notturno" (Milano, Treves), has caused a commotion in the literary field. Since 1914 the poet of the "Laudi" had abandoned literature, giving himself up entirely to the war and to political activity—which activity was greatly discussed because it brought Italy very near the verge of an abyss. This is not the time to discuss that activity, nor to illuminate the phenomenon which changed a man of letters into an active politician; here we are interested merely in D'Annunzio as a writer.

Let me hasten to say that, if not the general public—always ready to be dazzled by the tinsel of literary artifice—, the Italian critic has been disappointed. We had expected to find in this work a positive renewal of D'Annunzio's literary art, whereas in "Notturno" one found only very modest crumbs of what was the living and everlasting nucleus of that art. "Notturno" was written by the poet during the war when he had to live for a time in utter darkness owing to an aeroplane accident which injured his sight and threatened him with blindness. He wrote on long strips of paper, his hand guided by a contrivance on a tablet, about everything which passed through his mind: his recollections of peace and war times, his aspirations, his impressions and so forth. One understands that this kind of book can neither be an organic book, nor a book easily described. How can one summarize rapid sensations? One would be obliged to transcribe them entirely, overcoming D'Annunzio's extremely difficult style for translation into English of linguistic value. Let it suffice for one to say that the poet mentally sees Venice and describes it before and during the war in its ever-changing beauty; that he remembers his comrades who fell heroically on the battlefield; that he mentions May, 1915 in Rome when neutrality was agonizing in a popular tumult. He remembers the happy and unhappy days of his life, his last visit to his mother and his daughter who was his nurse.

But the whole "Notturno" is a failure as a work of art. It should have been a book of recollections, of memories, and also of prayer, a work in fact, in which love for his fatherland would serve as a lyrical impetus, not result in a literary pose. The whole book is pervaded with an unmeasured, even at times odious egotism; it would appear that D'Annunzio used his country not as that which kindled his love and faith—but as an admirable tool to illuminate his own personal vanity. And what ought to become ardent invocations to a greater, to a stronger Italy, are only exhibitions, in bad taste, on the poet's part, of his conceited ego, and empty theoric and literary exercises. A remoteness from real life and a cold verbal artificiality are felt throughout the work.

Even the stylistic sense reveals a mean remnant of what D'Annunzio's work used to be in the "Canto Novo" or, for instance, in the "Laudi's" third book which will definitively be immor-

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NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND STATES

1.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Glass of Fashion	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM

SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

1.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Glass of Fashion	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM

NORTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	Mystic Isles of the South Seas	*Frederick O'Brien*	CENTURY

SOUTH CENTRAL STATES

1.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
2.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
3.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
4.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
5.	The Glass of Fashion	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
6.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER

WESTERN STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
3.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
4.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Next War	*Will Irwin*	HARPER
6.	Margot Asquith: An Autobiography	*Margot Asquith*	DORAN

FOR THE WHOLE UNITED STATES

1.	The Outline of History	*H. G. Wells*	MACMILLAN
2.	Queen Victoria	*Lytton Strachey*	HARCOURT
3.	The Mirrors of Washington	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
4.	The Mirrors of Downing Street	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM
5.	The Americanization of Edward Bok	*Edward Bok*	SCRIBNER
6.	The Glass of Fashion	*Anonymous*	PUTNAM

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